

**Happiness at Hand.**  
O R A  
Plain and Practical  
**DISCOURSE**  
O F T H E

Joy of Just Mens Souls in the State  
of Separation from the Body.

For the Instruction of Weak Christians,  
and for the Comfort of the Afflicted.

By *J. B. Rector of Finchamsted*  
in the County of *Berks.*

*Pfal. 63. 3.*

*Thy Loving Kindness is better than Life.*

*Qui cupit dissolvi, & esse cum Christo, haud  
patienter moritur, sed patienter vivit, &  
delectabiliter moritur. Aug.*

**LICENSED, July 2. 1686.**

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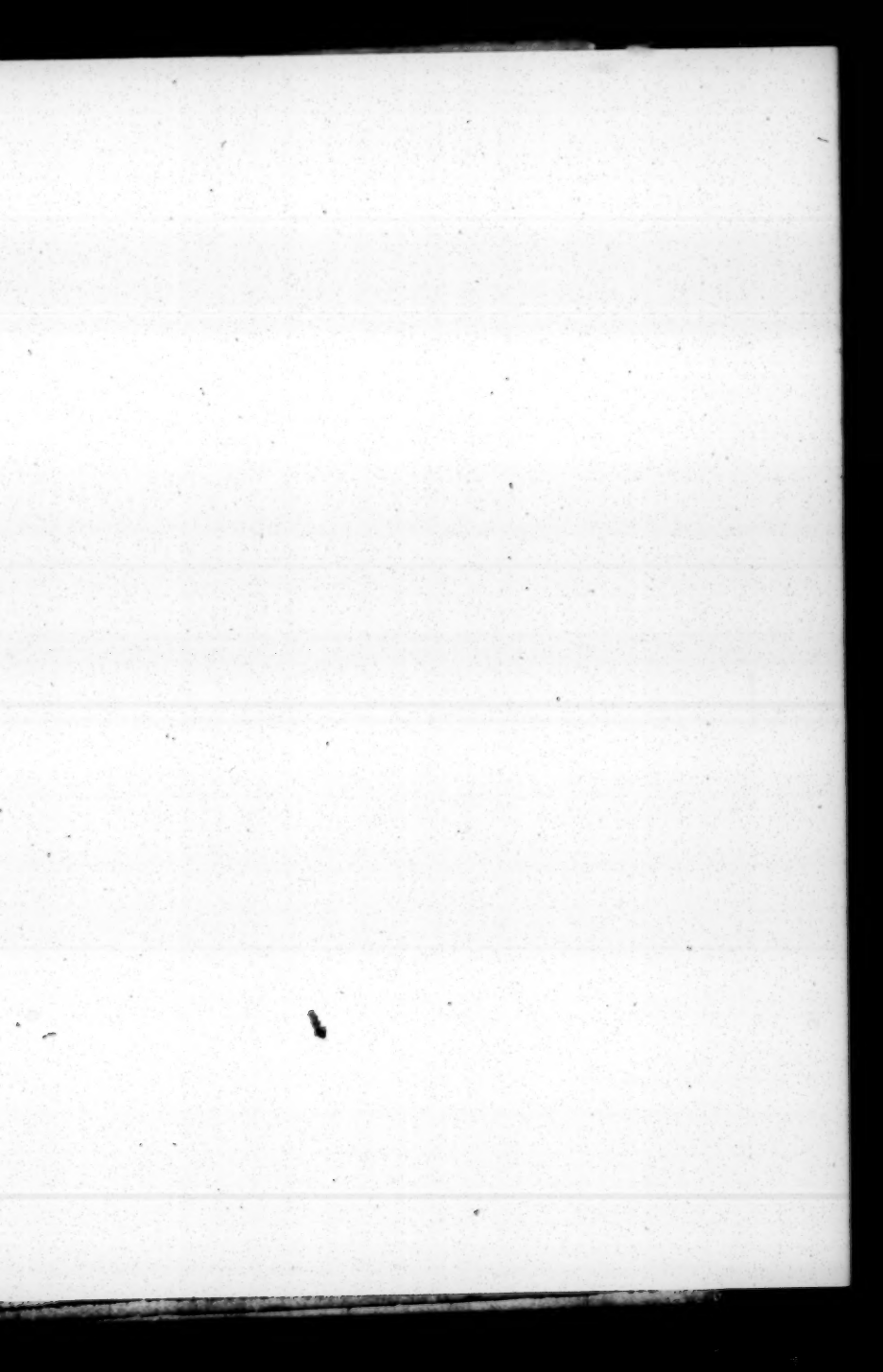
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Discipline of the



Plain

DISCIPLINE

of the Members of the Society  
of Separation in the Body  
For the Instruction of the Christians  
and for the Comfort of the Afflicted

By J. B. Rector of the Church of St. James  
in the County of Westminster

The Author's Name is printed in the Title  
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T H E

# Epistle Dedicatory.

*To the Worshipfull, and my most  
worthily honoured Friend, Dr.  
Robert Woodward, Chancel-  
lour of my Lord Bishop's Court  
at Sarum.*

Worthy Sir,

**A**S I have adventured to  
make use of your Name  
in this way, so I am per-  
swaded, 'tis scarce more easie  
for uncharitable Minds to *Blame*  
me for it, than for your *Kind-  
ness*, and *Courtesie* to excuse it,  
A in

## The Epistle

in some Measure ; And if Any should account me presumptuous in so doing, I can truly tell them, That I had a very great, ( and almost Irresistible ) *Temptation* to it : For, Gentlemen of good Repute and Judgment do not seem to doubt, ~~but~~ I might bear the Reflections of *Ingratitude*, as well as *Imprudence* ; if, ( having an opportunity ) I should not make some publick *Acknowledgment* of my *Obligations* to your *Worship*, for those great Instances of your undeserved *Friendship*, which ( Blessed be God ) I so happily received, in those publick *Circumstances*, that made me stand in need of so Good a *Friend*.

Accept

## Dedicatory.

Accept therefore, I beseech you, Sir, this plain *Piece*, as a *Pledge* of the unfeigned *Thanks* that I must ever owe you.

And, Sir, I do the rather beg your *Acceptance* of it, because the *Doctrine* defended is apparently owned by the *Church of England*; and, partly, Because if it find (in the Main) that *Honour* and *Favour*, I shall think my self sufficiently Armed against the *Censures* of the *Profane, Malignant World*.

The *Father* of *Mercies* follow you still with His *Goodness*; Granting you many *Happy Days* here on Earth; and, when your *Time* is ended;

## The Epistle, &c.

the Joys of *Eternity*, and the  
*Blessedness* of Them that *Dye* in  
the Lord. So praying, resteth,  
( Good Sir )

*Your Worship's, most humble Servant,*

*and most effectually obliged,*

John Brandon.

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A Word

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## A Word to the READER.

**C**hristian Reader. If thou askest, why I publish this Discourse? I can safely answer, 'Tis not to offend thee. But possibly Thou mayst expect some further Account, which take as followeth.

I. The Subject here treated of, is not so commonly handled as many other Points of Religion; Among the Multitudes of Books abroad in the World (which I have made some Enquiry about) there is not so much as one Pocket-Volume, that I can find, written upon it, purposely, plainly and practically; And Those that have spoken occasionally of it in larger Pieces containing various Subjects, have said a great deal more than they have proved, about it; I could shew a pretty many pages relating to it, that afford not so much as one good Sub-



## To the Reader.

*stantial Argument for the truth of it; and yet it deserveth to be as well proved as most Doctrines that I know of, (and much better than some that have been sufficiently contended for.)*

2. 'Tis a Subject that seems to afford an Eminent Degree of Support and satisfaction to a Pious Soul. For though the Being (forever with the Lord) be the Top of our Felicity, (whether we enjoy it sooner or later) yet, *me thinks* the Hope of being with Him in a little Time may be a great Addition to a Christian's Joy.

May it not be a Matter of Special (yea strong) Consolation, to think and Believe (on Scripture grounds) that he shall be a Gainer by his Dissolution, have his Soul with Christ and his Angels before his Body is with Worms, and Dust, and see the Eternal Light and Love, as soon as Death has drawn the Vail of Flesh?

And that it may Assist thee (Christian Reader) in the chearfull Service of thy God, (which is the truest Heaven that Thou canst hope for here on Earth) is so  
evident.

## To the Reader.

evident that it need not be proved. Well  
may he serve his God with Gladness,  
that hopeth so shortly to see his Salvation.

And I was the more encouraged to go  
on herein, because I feared no Opposers:  
For the Church of England teacheth its  
Friends to say (in the Burial Service) [O  
God with whom the Souls of the  
Faithfull, after they are delivered  
from the Flesh, are in Joy and Feli-  
city.] And if I am opposed by its Ene-  
mies, it will be matter of small Regard  
with me, (yet if any man of what perswa-  
sion soever, shall employ his Pen to Dis-  
prove the Main of what I have said on  
this Point, He may be attended to, if  
God grant Life and Leisure.)

I can easily judge, that a Work of  
this Nature were fitter to be managed  
by others, than by Me, yet that must  
not hinder me from doing it as  
I can. And if my Imperfect Doing of  
it may Anger any man so far as to  
move him to do it Better, I shall think,  
I have written to very good purpose.

And

## To the Reader.

And now, I have onely to Request of thee these few things.

1. That thou wouldst reade over this Discourse (when thou hast not a better at hand,) for which I need urge no other Motives, than the Smallness of it, and the Greatness of it's Subject.

2. That thou reade it with a Charitable Eye, and a Christian Aim, receiving the Truth with all Readiness of mind; not Rejecting any thing thou findest to be Sound, for the Sake of any thing that thou thinkest to be weak.

3. That thou wouldst beseech God of all Grace, to give us such Grace as may be sufficient for us; such as may fit us both (in his due time) for the Participation of that Felicity which this small Book is designed to Discover. I add no more but to Subscribe my Self

Thy Servant, for the Sake of Jesus,

Pineham-  
sted (Berks)  
May 10th.  
1686.

John Brandon



A Ta-

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## Happiness at Hand.

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*The Introduction, with some pre-suppositions relating to the Point.*

**T**HAT Godliness is great gain, and the ways thereof peace and pleasantness, is assured to us by the Authour of that blessed Book which may save our Souls but cannot deceive them. And though Religion be so good in this Life that every good action may afford some degree of comfort (as Dr. Sibbs was wont to say) when the Soul is not under temptations and mistakes ; yet the best of Religion is reserved for another World,

B                      and

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and its strongest Consolations kept in store to be enjoyed in that high and holy place where there is joy without sorrow, peace without trouble, Sanctification without Sin, and all without end.

And that thy Joy may be full, consider (Christian Reader) what grounds thou hast to believe that this Happiness is at Hand also, and shall be possessed in good part by thy Soul in its separated State; most certainly the love of thy Lord is better than Life, and will be better to thy Spirit than the life of thy Flesh and all the comforts of this lower World; the discovery of which I am not presently to attempt, but rather to premise a few particulars in order to it.

The first thing to be supposed as the Foundation of what follows, is [*The immortality of Mens Souls*] which some have been so brutish as to call in question, imagining that  
Men



*Happiness at Hand.* 3

Men die (in all respects) as the Beasts that perish and therefore live as if Body and Soul should rot together.

Whose folly therein I need, on this occasion, no farther to shew than by considering the words of him who is the faithfull and true Witness, and knows us better than we do our selves, viz. *Mat. 10. 28.* [*Fear not them that can kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul.*]

In which words our Saviour spake plain enough: nor can any subtilty in the earth evade the force of them; or obscure to any purpose, the clearness of that Testimony which they give to the Souls Immortality. For they are brought in as an encouragement to his Apostles to preach the Gospel; an encouragement I say, against the fury of Persecutours (of whom he spake in the foregoing verses.) He would not have this dishearten them: *Fear not* (says he)

#### 4 *Happiness at Hand.*

*them that can kill the Body but are not able to kill the Soul. q. d.* [As they can do nothing more against you than they are permitted to doe, so the worst they can possibly do to you can kill no more than your Bodies: your nobler parts your Souls are above the reach of all their violence; therefore fear them not in any discouraging way.] Will not any one that readeth that Text with heedfulness, and without prejudice, be satisfied that this is the meaning of it? And if it were designed by our Saviour to express the Souls immortality, how could it be done more effectually and more plainly in a few words? But nothing is plain enough to them that will not see the truth. The strength of which as to this particular, may appear by the weakness of those Interpretations which the contrary minded have put upon this Text.

I. (Say some) the killing of the Soul

*Happiness at Hand.* 5

Soul may be meant of *Damning* it. They cannot *kill* it with *Eternal Death* or *Damnation*.

*Ans.* That none of the greatest Persecutours could kill the Soul in *that manner* is very true, but 'tis not the meaning of that Text [*Mat. 10. 28.*] For the *Damning* of the Soul is not spoken of in the word, *kill*; but in the word, *Destroying*; but fear him who is able to *Destroy* Body and Soul in Hell, (in the same verse) now to [*kill,*] and to [*Destroy,*] are different words, and as different things: the disobedient are threatened with an everlasting [*Destruction,*] 2 *Thes. 1. 9.* but no where with an everlasting *killing*. 2. The [*killing*] of the Soul which is there denied to be in the power of Men, is not to be understood of *Damnation*, because *that* is never expressed by that word (in Scripture) Let any Man shew so much as one Text therein where the *Damnation* either

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of the Soul or of the Person is called a *killing* of the one or the other.

3. The same word in the Original is used of both, which shews it meant in the same sense of both. So that as the word [*everlasting*] (*Mat. 25. 46.*) spoken of the punishment of the wicked, is the same that is spoken of the Life, or Glory, of the Righteous ; and therefore proves the perpetuity of the former as well as of the latter, (as is shewed elsewhere.) So the Original word for

	[ <i>killing</i> ] * Ἀποκτείνω
* <i>Everlasting</i>	being the same for
<i>Fire no Fancy.</i>	substance that is used
Cap. I. Sect. I.	in the said Text, concerning the <i>killing</i> of
	the Soul and of the Body, it must
	needs be understood accordingly.

So that [they can kill the Body but cannot kill the Soul] must needs signifie to us that the Soul continues to live the life of a Soul when the Body ceaseth to live the  
life.



life of a Body. And I know not how any can deny it unless he be resolved upon perverseness, and will offer violence to the plainest speeches imaginable.

4. At that rate of Interpretation which these Objectors use, our Saviour should, (therein) have spoken no more of the Soul than may be said of the Body. For Men (we know) cannot *Damn* the Body no more than the Soul. But there we see the [*killing*] which is denied as to the Soul, is granted of the Body [*that can, says our Lord, kill the Body but cannot kill the Soul.*] And if any yet think the meaning is that no Persecutors can damn the Souls of God's Servants, I wou'd fain know why they suppose him to have taught so plain a truth in so dark a manner; For how shall we be certain that [*killing*] means *Damnation* in that place, when it signifieth no such thing in any other Scriptures?



Others can fancy the meaning is [that men cannot *kill* the Soul for ever] or for good and all (as we say.) But that's as vain as the former, and appears to be so by the same reason; for then there should be no more said of the Soul than may be said of the Body; for they cannot kill the Body for ever: it shall be alive after death has done its worst; *It shall be raised Incorruptible* (1 Cor. 15.) *and this mortal must put on Immortality.*

— And that the word, *kill*, (in St. Matthew) must be meant of killing [for ever] no proof can be pretended to either from the phrase, or circumstances, or scope of the place, and therefore it might be sufficient to deny it without confuting it.

Others again would evade the force of this Text of St. Matthew by comparing it with *Luk. 12. 4. Fear not them that kill the Body, but after that have no more that they can do,*

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do, where there is nothing said of the Impossibility of killing the Soul. — And indeed as a Kingdom is most in danger when it is divided against it self, so Religion (they perceive) is most powerfully resisted when it is opposed by its own strength, (by that blessed word which is at once its rule and support) But it cannot be used for so ill a purpose without gross ignorance or great perverseness as may easily be exemplified in the said Objection.

For (first) both these Texts are from the same Spirit of Truth : and however the latter be expressed, yet the former is the word of Christ also, and he really meaneth as he speaketh therein. And if Men could any way make the Soul of Man to *cease* to be a living Soul, it would signifie little to say that they cannot *kill* it ; since (on that supposal) they may do as much, whether it be properly called killing or

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no : nor would that Man well escape the imputation of a Blasphemer that should say the infinite wisdom would speak so vainly on any occasion.

*Obj.* But yet St. *Luke* doth not so express it; and St. *Matthew* (say some) may be expounded by S. *Luke*.

*Sol.* 1. Though it be not so expressed by St. *Luke*, yet where it is so expressed, I desire the liberty of believing it true. 2. There is no necessity (in this affair) of expounding the one by the other; and if there were it may seem fitter to expound *Luk.* 12. 4. by *Mat.* 10. 28. than contrarily, for that of *Matthew* is more special and particular than that of *Luke*. And if any will say our Saviour did not intend to teach us the Souls immortality in the former, because he did not mention it in the latter, yet we must not suffer their confidence to carry it, (as we say) or take their word for it. Nor  
can.

*Happinefs at Hand.* . . . II

can they require us so to doe unless they shou'd pretend to Mr. *Hobbs's* profoundness, or a greater Man's infallibility.

Having supposed, and in part proved, that the Soul of Man remains alive after his Body is dead; the next particular I would premise is this [that it is a Subject capable of joy or sorrow after it leaves the Body] according as it leaveth it in a State of Sin or a State of Grace. It is not like some sort of Insects in the depth of Winter, that have a vital principle without motion or operation, that are alive and seem as insensible as if they were dead.

I know some would perswade us the Soul sleeps after Death: but their great errors in other things may fully excuse us from believing them in this; and I think it as strange a fancy as can enter into the Head of any Man that hath his understanding well awake: for

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as the Psalmist says of God [*He that made the Eye shall he not see?*] So we may say of the Soul, that which gives sense to the Body, shall not it perceive? especially since it liveth after it leaves the Body (as hath been proved.)

---

S E C T. I.

*The Happiness of good Mens Souls, in their Separation from the Body asserted, and the probability of it discovered.*

**B**Efore the proof and Vindication of this point it may be proper to shew the probability of it (that they who are not perswaded 'tis true may not be over confident that it is false) by shewing the judgment  
of

of Eminent Writers, that are presumed able to judge of a matter of this nature. And if I were to satisfy a Romanist of it I might cite the noted Men of his Church: i.e. (1.) *Aquin.* their great Schoolman *Sum. prim. 2<sup>de</sup>. quest. 4. Art. 5. Aliqui dicunt quod Animæ separatæ ad beatitudinem non perveniunt, &c.* "Some" (says he) tell us that good Mens Souls come not to Blessedness till the day of Judgment. But this is plainly false. In like manner goes *Bellarmino* in his tract *de Arte Moriendi*, and especially in *Lib. de ascens. mentis grad. 2 chap. 5. p. 35. Quid mirum (ait) si Angeli & beatæ Animæ, &c.* Where he joins together the Angels and Just Mens Souls, doubting the happiness of the one no more than the other. So *grad. 7. cap. 5. — Quibus perpetuus Dies est, &c.* [Speaking of the same] 'Tis always day with them, they know no darkness of sin or sorrow. *Tho. à Kempis*



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*Kempis de imitat. Christi lib. 1. cap. 23. Sect. 6. Drexel. Heliotrop. l. 1. c. 1. Sect. 4. Cajetan in Philip. 1. 23.* most plainly, in several passages that I need not transcribe. But I leave these and rather cite our Protestant Worthies. *Musculus in Math. 17. Mors piorum Egressus est ex mundo ad patrem, &c. i. e.* The death of Godly ones is a going out of this World to their Heavenly Father, therefore to be desired more than to be dreaded. *Zanchius in Philip. 1. 23. Quanam sui parte, &c.* — [In what respect did *Paul* desire after his dissolution to be with *Christ*? Not in respect of his Body, apparently therefore of his Soul : therefore his Soul was capable of that Happiness immediately after death.] Others speak to the same purpose as follows. *D. Job. Maccov. de Anim. sep. in explic. Theorem. 2. Ursin. Catech. part. 2. Resp. ad quest. 42. Paræus in Rom. 6. Resp. ad Dub. 9. Alsted. Theol. Casuum*



p. 172. *Pifcator in Philip. 1. Effenius in Triumpho Crucis (de fatisf Chrifti) lib. 1. feét. 4 cap. 3 (part. 1.) Dan. Chamiet. lib. 25. cap. 2. (de Beatiudine) Jof. Stegman. Photin. difp. 52. q. 1. Jo. Scarpui curs. theol. de purgatorio. Palan. syntagma l. 7 cap. 5. Arnoldus (Lux. in Tenebr. p. 418. D. Henr. Altin-  
gius L. C. Loc. 5. Controvers. 2. —*

To whom I may add a few of our English Worthies (and thofe are as good as a great many) Bp. Usher *Sub-  
ftance of Chriftian Religion (of Judg-  
ment)* Bp. Prideaux *Fafcicul. de Ec-  
clefiâ q. 2. B. Davenant in Colof. cap. 3. ver. 15. Bolton de 4. Noviffimis.* And  
this at leaft muft be a probable Ar-  
gument of the truth of what I con-  
tend for : for that is like to be found  
Doctrine which is fo evidently own-  
ed by thefe excellent Authors fo  
blessedly enriched with the wife-  
dom from above. And if any fuch,  
(or lefs than they) had written a  
fet Difcourfe on it, plainly and prac-  
tically,

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tically, and to the capacities of vulgar Christians, I might have spared the little pains that I have taken about it.

If then I have erred in maintaining this Principle I have erred with Company (and good Company too) But I trust the ensuing Sections will shew it to be a truth to those that seek the truth in love.

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SECT.

S E C T. II.

*The Happy State of Good Mens Souls after death proved from Philip. 1. 23. [having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better] together with an Answer to a Socinian exception.*

**H**AVING told thee (Christian Reader) that this Doctrine is probably true, I am now to shew how certainly 'tis so, and that in the first place from those words of the Apostle, [*Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.*] In 1 Cor. 15. he called Death an Enemy, and doubtless he was not in love with it as considered in itself: But yet to die and be with Christ, this he heartily desired  
as

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as that which would be far better for him. He tells his beloved People (*vers. 24.*) that his continuance in the World would be most for their benefit. [*To abide in the Flesh, is more needfull for you.*] But his departing would be most for his benefit being a departing and being with Christ. And therefore he was in a strait (as he calls it) not knowing which to chuse. Now if he should not upon his departure be with Christ, as to his Soul, he must needs have accounted a longer life to be most desireable. For as to others good it was apparently so, and no less for his own good also, if his Soul could have no happiness in its absence from the Body; for he had a great degree of comfort in Christ while he was living, and could say in the midst of all his Persecutions, Blessed be God who always giveth us cause to Triumph in Christ. And he that had an eminent measure of  
Com-

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Communion with Christ while living, and all those strong Consolations that flowed from his assurance that nothing should separate from his love (*Rom. 8.*) would have been a great loser by dying, if his Soul must then have been deprived of those precious comforts which before he had in *Christ*.

Surely St. *Paul's* words shew no fear of any such thing, but plainly evince the contrary, as the like expression in other cases would be thought to import. Suppose one say, [I desire to go to *London* and see my Friends, or, I desire to go to Church and profit my Soul] In these speeches any Man of reason would judge (unless the person had the reputation of a Lyar) that he certainly meant as he spake, and hoped to see his Friends by doing the one, and to benefit his Soul in doing the other. And so in Scripture, *To go up and see the Land, to go over and possess*

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*possess it* (Numb. 13. 30. Deut 3. 25.) are meant of going to see and possess it as the Way to the one and the other. And if St. Paul's phrase [*to depart and be with Christ*] were not meant in like manner, it were something more than very strange; and it can be no otherwise, his being *with Christ* after his departure being affirmed to be a better state than before he had (notwithstanding the enjoyments before mentioned) nor must our Opposers right reason (which they talk so much of) dissuade us from expounding the words in that way that is most agreeable to common sense.

And though this may seem plain enough to any unprejudiced person, yet it will not be amiss to answer what is excepted against it, and to clear it from that darkness which some have (so learnedly) cast upon it.

Except. And as to this I know none more considerable than *V. Smalcus*,  
who

who in his Disputation [*De Judicio Extremo*] is pleased to present us with this *Memorandum*, viz. 1. That *St. Paul* there makes no mention of his Soul, but speaketh [*De se toto*] of his whole Person. 2. That he might die and be with Christ at the Appointed time (the Resurrection) without supposing any Being with Christ presently after death.]

*Ans.* By this Man's temper (and Tenet) we may see that humane Learning and Acuteness is not sufficient to make a Man sound in the Faith, and it might move our wonder that one of so much subtilty should not perceive the Apostles meaning in this particular, if we did not remember the old saying, *None so blind as those that will not see*, for had it been (confessedly) intended to shew his Souls being with Christ (or enjoying of him) upon his departure, yet it needed not have been expressed otherwise than by a  
desire



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desire to depart and be with Christ. For after his departure he could not be with Christ as to his Body till the Resurrection ; which will be at the time appointed and cannot be hastened by his (or any Man's) shorter Life. Nor could he desire to depart this Life, if it were not for the hope of being with Christ in a better state thereby, since it was more for his Peoples profit to have lived longer with them. And we are satisfied he was not weary of his Life through the troubles that he met with in the service of Christ (his Faith and Love was more powerfull than so) nor doth he name any thing but his being with Christ (which was far better) as a motive to him to desire to depart this Life.

And to say ['tis not meant of his Soul's being with Christ, because he speaks of his *Person*, without naming his *Soul*] is indeed to talk more like an Ignorant Man than a Divine

vine or a Disputant, for 'tis spoken of his *Person* in respect of his *Soul*: and nothing is more common in discourse than to speak that of Persons, which holds true of them in respect of their Bodies, or their Souls (though not both perhaps) as when we say, they are Sick or Lame, Wise and Knowing, &c. we hope we may speak true enough, and proper enough too, though we do not say (*formaliter*) they are Sick as to their Bodies, &c.] but say (absolutely) [they are sick] so when Scripture says, *To dust thou shalt return*, it must be taken accordingly: and my Authors Brain was not so Earthy as to think it must be so therefore with his whole Person; or to argue that *Man's Soul* shall turn to Dust, because 'tis said *to Dust [thou] shalt return*. More therefore I need not say upon this Argument, till others think fit to say more against it. Yet for the comfort of  
weak

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weak Christians I think fit to add, that this privilege [of being with Christ after Death] is not peculiar to St. Paul but belongs also to all that are truly Godly. Death (as well as Life) is *yours*, said he to the believing *Corinthians*, and in them to all other faithfull Christians, and certainly he meant, t'was theirs in a comfortable sense, for their good, and leading to their happiness, I Cor. 3. 22. And if all things work for good to them that love God, Death shall also (and do *them* a kindness as well as the Apostle) Rom. 8. 28. nor doth the Apostle make any comparison between himself and the rest of the faithfull in this case, or set himself above them in any respect: as also in other places he declares them to have the same interest in him, and Acceptance for his sake. *Christ who is our Life*, Colos. 3. 4. *He made us accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. 1. 6. Phil. 4. 19. [*My God shall supply all*  
*your*

*Happiness at Hand.* 25

*your need according to his Riches in Glory through Christ Jesus. Yea, He is made unto us, Wisdom and Righteousness, and Sanctification and Redemption, 1 Cor. I. 30.*

And that the Souls of other Christians are capable of happiness after death, as well as S. Paul's, I will undertake to prove when I can think worth while so to doe.

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C      S E C T.

## S E C T. III.

*The point proved from Luke 23. 43. [This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise; and Colof. 1. 20. To reconcile all things to himself whether things on Earth or things in Heaven] with an Answer to some exceptions.*

**A**Mong the many Scriptures that confirm this comfortable Doctrine, these are very considerable. In the former our Saviour tells the dying Penitent the joyfull News [*This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*] but he was not so in respect of his Body, therefore in respect of his Soul. Whether his Soul was to be that day in Heaven, or only tending to it, I shall not here enquire;  
 'Tis

'Tis enough for my purpose that it was to be in *Paradise* ; for that can signifie no less than a place and state of happinefs. And we doubt not but Christ's favourable presence could make any place a *Paradise* for delight, and more delightfull than the Earthly *Paradise* ever was. This Text is so strong on our side that our greatest opposers can hardly tell what to say to it, any otherwise than by espousing that wretched evasion of the foresaid *Racovian* Doctor *Val. Smalcus*, viz. Changing the Sentence, by misplacing the Comma, and reading the words thus [*Verily I say to thee this day, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise*] namely, some time or other, as if [*this day*] were meant of Christ's speaking, and not of the Penitent's enjoying. *Modus loquendi Hebraicus*, &c. It is, says he, a speaking after the manner of the Hebrews, who use to express themselves so, when they would tell us

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28 *Happiness at Hand.*

matters of special remark, as *Deut.*  
 30 18. *If ye Worship other Gods and*  
*serve them, I denounce unto you this day*  
*that ye shall surely perish.*

But if they gain  
*Luk.* 23. 43. the cause at such a  
 cleared. rate, let them take

all, and set up their  
 own Heresie for sacred and saving  
 truths. For 'tis easie to turne truth  
 into errour, and sense into nonsense,  
 by mis-pointing any places of Scrip-  
 ture or any other Books; and when  
 Men make so bold with the words  
 of our Lord, we may fitly call them  
 to account for it, and censure their  
 presumption and perverseness, which  
 in this case seems very plain. For  
 first, they shew us no good reason  
 why it should be read [*I say unto*  
*thee this day*] nor was there need  
 that Christ should tell him that he  
 said so in *that day*; nor do we find  
 him use such an expression in any  
 place, or on any great occasions.  
 For

For when he would tell us the necessity of Conversion, he ſays not [*I ſay unto you this day*, but [*Verily I ſay unto you, except ye be converted ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, and the like of his being owned by the Angels [*Verily, Verily I ſay unto you, hereafter ye ſhall ſee Heaven open, and the Angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the Son of Man*, Joh 1. 51.

Vain enough therefore is that Author's ſuggeſtion, that it was ſo ſpoken for the weightineſs of the matter. And though in the Old Teſtament there were ſuch phraſes uſed [*I ſay to thee this day*] yet it was in matters of threat, or of command, but not in matters of promiſe, or comfort. Our Lord alſo hath it [*Verily I ſay, &c.*] now as there was no need at all of ſuch a ſolemn Aſſeveration to tell the Penitent Thief *when* it was he ſpake unto him (his own Ears being ſufficient)

ent) so it was very proper to be used in telling him of the happy change that he should make so *speedily*, and tended much to satisfy him in it.

So that of the Apostle, *Colos. i. 20. to reconcile all things to himself, whether things on Earth or things in Heaven.* Here what can we suppose meant by [*things in Heaven reconciled*] *Piscator* expoundeth *tam fideles*, &c. as well the faithful received to Heaven as those still on Earth. If this be the sense of it 'tis full enough to prove the faithful Christians Soul to be happy after death: and if it be not, I almost despair of knowing it. As to the Holy Angels it seems very improper to interpret it of them; for how are they Things reconciled that never offended their God, and so needed not any reconciliation? [And there is in that Chapter no discourse of *Enoch* and *Elias*, or any thing to enforce it to be meant of them] and  
whe-

*Happiness at Hand.* 31

whether the expressing it by *τὰ πάντα*,  
all things, not [all Persons] he may  
not have a special respect to the  
Souls of the faithfull departed, I  
leave to others to consider of.

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5 S E C T. IV.

*The same proved from 2 Cor. 5.  
8. [we are willing rather to be  
absent from the Body, and pre-  
sent with the Lord; and Heb.  
12. 23. [The Spirits of just  
Men made perfect.*

**I**F other places should not satisfie  
Men as to this particular, yet  
*these* one would think could not fail  
of so doing. In the former St. Paul  
speaks nothing that was peculiar to  
himself, but joyneth the rest of the  
C 4 faith-

32 *Happinefs at Hand.*

faithfull in the very ſame privilege with himſelf. [We, ſays he, are willing to be abſent from the Body, and to be preſent with the Lord.] Wherefore it muſt needs be granted that the Apoſtle did believe that when they were (as he calls it) abſent from the Body, they ſhould be preſent with the Lord, not only in a general ſenſe, as all things are, but in a *gracious* and *ſpiritual* manner, and ſuch as containeth more comfortable Communion with him than any they could have in this mortal Life; and that their *being thus* preſent with ~~them~~, when abſent from the Body is to be underſtood in reſpect of their Souls, is that which needeth not to be proved to any that make uſe of ſober reaſon, and are willing to underſtand the plainest words; and I find not that the contrary minded have made any exceptions againſt this proof that are worthy any ſerious conſideration. And  
for

*him*



for that of the Apostle, [Heb. 12. 23.] I take it to be no less convincing; *For what but the Souls of good Men can be supposed to be called the Spirits of just Men made perfect?* For it cannot be said of the Angels, they being distinguished from them in the same verse, nor can it be meant of the Persons of Men (Bodies and Souls united) for these are called Men, and not Spirits; much less the Spirits of just Men.

*Obj.* But we find in Scripture, the Angels that have a charge over the faithfull are called *their* Angels, and why may they not be called *their* Spirits, being Spirits indeed?

*Ans.* The question in this matter is not, whether they *may* not be so called in some sense, or respect? but whether in that Text they *are* so called, and I say they are not, for two Reasons.

I. Because the Angels are mentioned just before (as was intimated.)



34 *Happiness at Hand.*

ted) and they are never called the Spirits of Men, or the Spirits of the Just, in Scripture.

2. Because these are spoken of as made perfect (as the things that are imperfect are brought to perfection by degrees, for so the original signifieth) now the Holy Angels never were destitute of any perfection that their nature needeth. Since therefore it must be only the Souls of the Just that there are called the Spirits of the Just, it will be easie to conclude the point from it. For 'tis evident it cannot be meant of their Spirits (or Souls) while in the Body here on Earth; for in this state they are not made perfect, but have a great deal of sinfull imperfection in them: not as though I were *already perfect*, said St. Paul of himself. *And 'tis said they are made perfect*: that is, *already perfect*; and therefore is not spoken of that perfection which they shall have *hereafter at*  
the

*Happiness at Hand.* 35

*the Resurrection of their Bodies,* (nor can the scope of the place, or context, favour the interpreting of it concerning their state on Earth) and since it cannot be understood of their Souls in their Bodies on Earth nor at the Resurrection, then it must be meant of their Souls in their separated state. And if in that state ~~they are,~~ they are more perfect than before they were, they must certainly be more happy also.

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SECT.

## S E C T. V.

*The same Doctrine proved from  
Rev. 14. 13. Blessed are the  
Dead that die in the Lord;  
for they rest from their La-  
bours, &c.*

**H**AVING urged several Scriptures for my purpose, I shall now only add this unto them. And if any Person doubts whether this will prove the happy state of Just Mens Souls in separation from their Bodies, he must be a Man of doubtfull Religion.

But (for the business) let us note in what manner the truth was manifested: I heard, said St. John, a voice from Heaven saying to me, write, *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.*

Note

*Happiness at Hand.* 37

Note also that it is not spoken of Men as living on Earth or in Heaven, but of them as dying in the Lord, (in his Faith and Fear) *Blessed are those Dead.*

It is added, from henceforth (from the time of their dying.) And how can we think it would be said, *Blessed are those Dead, if they did not obtain some blessed privilege by dying?* if death did not bring more good to their Souls than hurt to their Bodies; then we have the Spirit asserting it, *yea, saith the Spirit;* Together with one part, or property, of their blessedness; *they rest from their Labours,* (from all their troubles whatsoever.) And this Rest must include a positive happiness in the Love and Peace of their gracious God: For a meer Negative, or Privative Rest, consisting in a bare Freedom from Pain and Trouble, is no more than the Beasts partake of; when the Horse is dead there's an end of his wear-

38 *Happiness at Hand.*

weariness as well as his work. And I hope we may safely believe that a dead Christian (that shewed himself such in his life) is in a better state presently after Death than a dead Beast can be; and he whose Religion is any thing stronger than his Atheism will account this Text an evidence of it.

And this shall suffice for Confirmation of the point, and I doubt not but it may be some satisfaction to those that seek the truth in Love, and humbly implore the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. In the next place I am to make good my method, and so to vindicate this truth from exceptions, and defend it from that violence which some have offered unto it.

SECT.

S E C T. VI.

*The Happiness of Just Mens Souls,  
in the state of separation, vin-  
dicated.*

**A**S to contend for the truth is no unlawfull strife (by clearing and confirming it) so to maintain it against objections is not unnecessary. And I know not whether some may not expect it.

But before I answer Mens Cavils against this comfortable Doctrine, it may not be amiss to say something to those that would dissuade us from meddling with matters of this nature. For to what purpose (say they) should we trouble our selves about it? For if we believe the Servants of God shall have an Eternity of Happiness after the Resurrection,  
is

40 *Happiness at Hand.*

is not that sufficient for us, whether our Souls can be happy in their separation or not?

Whether it is kindness or crossness, Religion or Sin, that moves men to talk after this rate, I shall not now enquire: Sure I am, It is our Duty to search the Scriptures (and blessed be God for the liberty of doing so.) And certainly 'tis not below us to search them for this purpose, if perhaps we may find satisfaction about it: which that we may, I trust, will be acknowledged by the unprejudiced Reader. Things revealed do belong to us; and that this is revealed may easily be perceived by what has been insisted on about it. And he that grants it a truth will never deny it to be a comfortable one (whatsoever also Christians may undervalue, methinks they should not despise the Consolations of the Scripture which will hold when other comforts fail) And though it be  
not



not very delightfull to deal with the confident cavils of deceived Sinners, yet to prevent their mischief, I am willing to bestow a few lines upon them. As for Scripture that they use to oppose this truth by, 'tis especially that of the Psalmist, *Pj. 6. 5. In death there is no Remembrance of thee, and in the Grave who shall give thee Thanks?* But must not they be very quick-sighted that can find in the place of Darkness, an Argument against this encouraging Doctrine?

But how little this Text maketh against it a few words will shew. For. 1. The Psalmist doth not say, *there is no Remembrance of God after Death*, but thus [*In Death there is no Remembrance of thee*, viz. In that which is in Death or under Death's power, even the Body. Or, *then there is no such Remembrance of God as in the time of Life*, for the Edification of others, (or the like) and we know Negatives in Scripture are  
some:

42 *Happiness at Hand.*

sometimes meant only in some respect, or kind; as when the Prophet says, *there is no Peace to the Wicked*: that is, *no sound well-grounded Peace*; for they may have Peace such as it is, yea till sudden destruction come upon them, *1 Thes. 5. 3.*

It follows, [*Who shall give thee Thanks in the Grave*] very sure, that's no place for Praise: Yet nothing hinders but that the Soul after its departure, may have a blessed Remembrance of the goodness of its God, and give him perpetual thanks, in its way and according to its capacity. Nor do those words of the Psalmist import any thing to the contrary:

For as it was no part of the Psalmist's design to enquire into the state of a separated Soul (in that Text) so the Soul it self, when separated from the Body, is not in the Grave. Nor doth it answer to the word [*Who*] for the Soul is not a Person, but only a Constitutive part of the Person. With

With no less vanity is *Psal.* 146.  
4. objected against this point [*His  
Breath goes forth, he returneth to his  
Earth, and in that very day his thoughts  
Perish*] for Man's [*thoughts*] in that  
Scripture, need be extended no farther  
than his Earthly Thoughts,  
his Counsels, Projects and Policies,  
as to this world,  
which is enough to *Moller in loc.*  
dissuade us from putting  
our trust in Man.

Which also to doe was the  
purpose of the Psalmist in that  
place. The Soul of the best Man  
would be pitifull Poor indeed,  
if after Death it should be deprived  
of all its thoughts (or thinking  
power) and I am very confident  
the Apostle would not have  
desired to depart this Life, if after  
Death his Soul should not have  
so much of Life as a thinking faculty  
containeth. In the new Testament  
also there are some Texts urged

44 *Happinefs at Hand.*

ged by these Men, but chiefly that of St. Paul 2 Tim. 4. 8. *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me in that Day,* (meaning the day of Judgment.)

Therefore that Blessedness signified thereby (say they) is reserved till that day, and not given before. But this Argument is so far wide that no art can make it come any thing close for their purpose. For though we grant that the Faithfull have not their Happinefs till then (which is the most that it can prove.) Yet that doth not contradict the Happinefs of their Souls, in their separated state. And how happy soever their Souls be in that case, yet their Persons cannot enjoy the State of Glory, till they are in the State of Personality, in the Union of their Bodies and Sou's; which will not be till the Resurrection.

There

There be, I confeſs, other Texts that ſome can fanſie this Doctrine to be opposed by ; but I paſs them, becauſe they are ſo far from confuting it, that in my Opinion, they do not ſo much as ſeem to concern it.

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## S E C T. VII.

*The point improved for Confutation of Errours.*

**A**mongſt the many good purpoſes for which the truth in hand may be ſerviceable, it may fitly be conſidered for the diſproving ſome principles, that ſome People have too gladly entertained. 1. That of the Libertines [that the Soul at Death looſeth its very being, and vaniſheth into Air (or what they pleaſe) or, that it then hath a drowſie

46 *Happiness at Hand.*

drowsie state, if any, and sleeps, as it were, in the Grave or other places] Doctrines exactly calculated for the Meridian of Profaneness, and may indifferently serve for all bad practices. They are indeed of such a dismal Aspect, and Malign Influence that I can hardly compare them to any more fitly than those that came out of the mouth of the *Leviathan* (for they look as ugly though not just like them.) And as one day their folly shall be manifested to all Men, so the present truth doth fully discover it.

For if the Soul in its separated state be capable of Joy and Happiness (as was proved) certainly then it looseth not its Being, nor its Apprehension. And well may he be deemed a senseless Man here, that thinketh his Soul shall be so insensible hereafter.

And as plainly doth it oppose the Doctrine of Purgatory, which  
though

though *Bellarmino* and his Brethren say hath its difficulties as to those questions about it, which the Church has not determined, yet is strongly asserted by them as a place of real punishment for the Souls of such as shall see Happiness at last; but must, in order to it, be Purged and Purified in that place of Suffering. Which can hardly need any other confutation than the proof of the happy state of the Spirits of the just in their departure from their Bodies; which I hope hath been given from the Texts urged for that purpose.

'S E C T.



## S E C T. VIII.

*For Trial of our selves, whether we are of the number of those just ones, that may justly expect this approaching Felicity.*

SINCE there is such a happy state for the just after Death, yea presently after it; so as that Death it self becomes their advantage; and leadeth their Souls into the blessed presence of their Saviour: Since it is thus (I say) methinks it should mightily move considering People to search and try their ways, and states, and see whether they are in such a state as may warrant them to lay claim to this *Happiness at Hand*, which the word of our God discovers to us. If it be reported (any thing credibly) that they who are  
fo

so and so qualified shall have Honours and Preferments, how easily would they be brought to consider whether they have the supposed Qualifications: at least if they think themselves capable of them (though at the same time they are not ignorant that Death will shortly disgrace all worldly glory.) Much more should Men try whether they can yet lay claim to that real Happiness, that shall come quickly and last for ever.

Now (as to this) They need no more to prove their Interest in it upon the account of Christ, than to prove themselves to be truly Just, or Righteous Persons. For 'tis the Just that shall come out of Trouble, *Prov.* 12. 13. 'Tis the upright one whose end is Peace, *Psf.* 37. 37. 'Tis the Righteous that hath hope in his Death, *Prov.* 14. 32 'Tis the same also that the Prophet tells us, shall enter into Peace, *Esa.* 57. 2. And we know by a Just or Righteous Man, the

50 *Happiness at Hand.*

Scripture meaneth a Godly or Religious Man. There are but two sorts, the *Good*, and the *Bad*, (in Scripture) which are commonly called the Righteous and the Wicked, (*Malachi* 3. *Psal.* 37.) The Just, and the Unjust (*Math.* 5.) So that the question will be [who are these Just, Righteous, Religious People?] To which I shall Answer, 1. Negatively, 2. Positively.

1. Negatively, They are not the Just ones that laugh at Religion, and mock at all that is called Holy; that are more taken with the principles of the *Leviathan*, than with the precepts of the Bible; that are Enemies to the word of Righteousness, and had rather hear of any thing almost than the holy truths thereof that most concern them; that say in their Hearts, their Tongues are their own; and are not affraid (of that fearfull Sin) to despise Government, and speak evil of Dignities,

2 *Pet.*

2 Pet. 2. 10. Jude 8. That drink as if they were made only to swallow, and keep Company (in their usual course) till they are unfit for any Company ; that love to raise themselves by the ruins of others, and spare not the Poor, the Widow, and the Fatherless, to gratifie their greedy humours, and please their proud malicious Minds ; that spight at the very Appearances of Piety, and rail at the most upright and inoffensive Livers when they have put some hated Names upon them (as the Heathens of old baited Christians with Dogs when they covered them all over with the Skins of wild Beasts) that go about doing mischief in abundance, inventing a company of ugly, silly, reproachfull tales to set us at a distance from each other, and destroy the sacred Bonds of Peace and Love ; that have so desperately debauched themselves, and overcome their con-

50 *Happiness at Hand.*

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52 *Happinefs at Hand.*

sciences, as to follow (without fear or shame) such courses as the Heathens would cry out against; that provoke the most high in the most horrible manner, and imprecate on themselves (on the smallest occasions) the wrath of that great God which the proudest Devils tremble at. That these and such like, are not the Just and Righteous ones, that the Scripture promiseth Salvation to, is very evident in it self. And I need no more to prove it, than to prove a Dunghill is not a Star. If therefore such People should have never so good thoughts of their States, yet in the day of God's Visitation, they shall see their Vanity, and understand with shame enough, that the holy one remembreth all their Wickedness, *Hof. 7. 2.*

And now I shall endeavour to shew what a Man may have, and yet not be a truly Just and Righteous Person, and afterwards add the  
Charac-



Character of such a one in various propositions.

For the former : A Person may have outward peace and prosperity, and yet not be a Just Person ; he may have very much of all earthly good , and not be good himself. Though prosperity is promised to the Godly so far as the Divine Wisdom sees fittest, yet it commonly cometh to many of the Wicked, *Pf. 73. 12.* Behold these are the ungodly, these prosper in the World. Yea the Tabernacles of Robbers did prosper, *Job. 12. 6.*

2 A Man may have (as outward prosperity, so) inward peace and yet not be a Righteous Man. That guilt may not much afflict the conscience here, which hereafter may sink the Soul into the horrid depths of endless sorrows. The *French* Historian tells us that two of the veriest Villains that ever that great Nation held, were observed

54 *Happiness at Hand.*

to die very quietly, though they shewed no signs of true Repentance; and St. *Paul* tells us of the wicked that when they say, Peace and Safety, then sudden Destruction cometh upon them, 1 *Thes.* 5.

3. One may have a fair outside and a good profession, be a moral honest Man (as they call it) and so far from scandalous in the Worlds Eye, as to escape their severer censures, and yet not be a just Man (indeed and in a Scripture sense.) It would be (in comparison at least) a very Happy Age, if all that seem good were so indeed: if all that are not scandalous in the sight of the World, were Righteous in the sight of God. The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* whom we must surpass in goodness, if ever we would see the Kingdom of Heaven, (*Mat.* 5. 20.) These I say, had (many of them) a fair outside, and could not have gained such a Reputation for Piety as we know

know they had, if they had come short of moral Men, and sober Livers ; and indeed they were somewhat more than such ; for 'tis not easie to conceive a more curious frame of Religion, as to the outward part of it than they had ; witness their Praying and Fasting, their Alms and Observation of the Sabbath, in *Mat.* 6. and elsewhere. Yet they were not spoken of as the Righteous Servants of God : yea that very Text, (*Mat.* 5. 20.) shews plainly that they came short of Heaven, notwithstanding all their pretences and performances.

And if a Man may be morally honest, and outwardly Religious, and yet not be Righteous and Religious indeed, O then (Christian Reader) what shall we think of those that are Scorners of Religion, and have scarce any shews of goodness in them : that value the Scripture no more than a Play Book,

and an Orthodox Sermon than an idle Story : that act contrary to the great Rules of Morality and Sober Reason, dishonouring their God and themselves, at once, by horrid Oaths and Imprecations, by Hellish Railings, Lyes and Slanders, in their ordinary course ; that call themselves People of the Church of *England*, and live as if they were made to disgrace it, saying (once in a month or two) [*I Believe in God*] yet behaving themselves daily as if they *Believed* there is no God ; boasting very frequently of the Loyalty of their principles, yet seldom coming to Church to pray for their King ; in a word, grinding the Faces of the poor and needy in the *grossest* manner) treating them with terrible threatnings, and discoursing them with Luciferian Loftiness, when they humbly beg the money that they have honestly earned of them,  
and

and beseech it for their necessities sake? O how far are these from the Just Man's path? And though at present they may have a false peace, yet when Conscience is awakened they may be forced to consider (with confusion enough) that their God is not to be mocked, and that he knoweth how to reserve the unjust to the day of Judgment to be punished, *2 Pet. 2. 9.*

4. A Man may have some kind of good motions, and good desires, and yet not be a truly Just and Righteous Person. *Pharaoh* himself desired *Moses* to pray for him, and 'tis said of *Simon Magus* that he *Believed*, *Acts. 8. 13.* which must needs imply some good thoughts of the Christian Faith, and some motion of his mind towards it. And those to whom the Holy Prophet was as a pleasant Song (which argues that they had some delight in his Ministry, and

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some desire after it) yet are not spoken of as God's Righteous Servants : for 'tis added, *They hear thy words but do them not, Ezech. 33. 32.* Divines, (I acknowledge) use to put a good Interpretation upon good desires, and speak often of their Acceptance in the sight of God, when they write for the comfort of afflicted Consciences : But then those good desires are supposed to be sound and well grounded, and attended with suitable endeavours, and an upright inoffensive Conversation in the main : But as for those good desires that too many are apt to content themselves with ; as when they content themselves to live ill, (in Sottish, Profane, Malicious, and Injurious practices) and yet satisfy themselves with this that they wish in some sort that they could do better (and so hope that God accepteth the Will for the Deed in such a case) This, I say, is a sad mistake,

mistake, and one of the most wretched delusions that ever *Satan* deceived any Sinner with; for God doth absolutely require Men, and chiefly Christian Professors to live well; and will never dispence with it for the sake of any good desires; nor are our desires truly good any further than they make us, truly and in the main, followers of that which is good. Nor can any desires be accepted with God, which a Man may have while his heart is in love with any way of Wickedness. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me, Psal. 66. 18.* These things are so plain that there may seem little need to say any thing to clear or confirm them: yet because 'tis the saddest thing imaginable for Men to be deceived to destruction by false Apprehensions of their own goodness here on Earth, I shall add a few words more about it. Consider therefore that as the  
Scrip-



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Scripture in some places describes the just by their good desires (for 'tis little of good, for any to doe what is good against their Wills) so in other places, and more usually it describes them by good Conversation, and upright doings. When the question is put, *Who shall dwell in God's Holy Hill*, (*Psal. 15. 2.*) 'tis answered, *He that walketh uprightly and worketh Righteousness.* (Not he that faintly wisheth to walk uprightly, and in the mean time liveth wickedly, but he that so desires it as to doe it in some measure, and in his ordinary course. So the Servant in the parable that is stiled *good and faithfull*, is intimated to have done well, and not only to have spoken well, or to have wished his Masters work well done, without any more concern about it. Thus also *Zachary and Elizabeth*, *Luk. 1. 6.* are commended for Righteous Persons, not for having some good thoughts

*Happiness at Hand.* 61

thoughts of God's ways, or some uneffectual good wishes about them, but for walking in them, (vers 6) *They were Righteous before God, walking in the Commandments of the Lord. The Righteous* (that are noted to be mercifull also) *are spoken of as walking in their uprightness, Esay. 57. 1, 2.*

Briefly, 'tis well doing, and not well wishing without it (where Ability and Opportunity is afforded) that shall end well at last, and come off with Credit at the great day of Revelation : *They that have done good shall come forth to the Resurrection of Life, Joh. 5. 29.*

And the great reason why Men shall be judged according to their ways, may be supposed to be this, because these are the truest discoveries of their desires and dispositions; (as the stream discovereth the nature of the Fountain whence it floweth) and the matter is clear in any other case : If, for instance,  
one

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one that hath took up Arms againſt his King, ſhould conſider what it is that he doth, how evil, how dangerous, how ſcandalous it is, and ſo ſhould reſolve (and accordingly deſire) to ceaſe his Rebellion, and become a true Subject: yet if he does not ſo indeed, and actually lay down his Arms (it being a thing that lyeth in his power) he is certainly no better than a Rebel ſtill, and muſt not think that his King will accept thoſe good deſires and Reſolutions that made him never a whit the better Man.

5. A Man may doe ſome good deeds and yet not be in the number of the juſt. Poſſibly his goodneſs may be as the Morning Dew, when his Wickedneſs is more conſtant and prevailing. His common courſe may be Earthly and Senſual, yea Devilish too, though he ſometimes make a ſhift to ſtep out of *Satan's* path into ſome good action for his credit

credit sake, or the like ends. As we have the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* for examples of it, though they were the greatest enemies our Saviour had.

It was said of *Amaziah*, he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect (or upright) heart, *2 Chron.* 25. 2. Thus some will doe works of Justice towards Men, and yet live in a wilfull and common neglect of the duties of Prayer, and publick Worship and Service toward God, and what is such Mens Righteousness worth, while 'tis so void of Religion towards the God of Righteousness? Some again will doe works of mercy towards the Poor, yet allow themselves to rail at the Rich, and spight at any that are above them in the World; and what is such Mens mercy worth?

Are these just Men indeed that are so injurious to their God, and  
disho.

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dishonour him more in some ways than they honour him in others? We think that Man more an Enemy than a Friend that knowingly and usually does us more hurt, than good. And our Religion, we know, engages us to mind (in its place) every part of God's revealed Will, to keep a good Conscience towards God as well as Men, and towards one as well as another, *Acts. 24. 16. Phil. 2. 15.* In short, to live Godly, Righteously and Soberly in this present World, *Tit. 2. 12.*

Having seen what good a Man may have and yet not be a good or just Man, I think it will be no inexcusable digression to consider what evil one may have and yet be such indeed.

I. A Person may have variety of troubles, yea such as the most and the worst do seldom meet with, and yet be a just Person (Righteous

*Happiness at Hand.* 65

ous and accepted in the sight of God) the straits of time may be Tempestuous to those to whom the Ocean of Eternity shall be calm enough. *Many are the troubles of the Righteous*, Ps. 37. and we know the troubles of *Job*, that upright Man, were such as few or none ever suffered the like.

2. Inward and Spiritual Afflictions are not at all inconsistent with the State of the just in this World. One may be full of doubts of his Salvation and fears of Hell, yea he may be under the extremity of these evils (and be swallowed up as it were in these depths of sorrow) and yet be an Heir of Heavens joy. The *Psalmist* shews us, *He had suffered God's Terrours from his Youth*, Psal. 88. 15. *Job* complained that *the Terrours of God had set themselves in array against him*, 6. 4. *Terrours are turned upon me, they pursue my Soul*, Chap. 30. 15. adding (v. 17.)  
My

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*My Bones are pierced in the night season, and my Sinews take no Rest.*

3. A Christian may be followed with great Temptations, yea with horrid and unheard-of ones, and yet may be a just Man. For it was so with our Lord himself. He was tempted to fall down and worship the unclean Spirit, and to cast himself down from the Pinnacle of the Temple, *Mat. 4 6. 9.* And if these things befell the Son of God, the vilest Temptations may be managed against the Servants of God. They that have grace in their hearts and favour in Heaven, may have their Heads filled with horrible thoughts (of God, Christ, Scripture, &c.) And these thoughts being hated increase not their guilt, but their grief only, and *Satan* the suggester of them shall answer for them, and not the tempted humbled Sinners.



4. A Man may have much to doe with Sin, and find a great deal of evil in his Soul, (in affections, thoughts and passions) and yet be found in the number of the just. Not only disturbing thoughts in Prayer and other Duties, but also many other evil affections and inclinations may be really in him, and yet he may be a Servant of God. St. Paul says, *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit* (Corruption against Grace) which supposeth sinfull dispositions. And Rom. 7. 21. says he of himself, *When I would doe good, evil is present with me*: Namely, the evil of his own heart, for the *πὸ κακὸν* signifieth properly not the evil one *Satan*, but the evil thing Sin. To which may be added Jam. 5. 17. where speaking of that eminently Righteous Man *Elias*, he saith, *He was a Man of like passions with us* — which seems to mean that he was subject to the same

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same sinfull passions that others are, and had them really though not Reigning in his Soul: such as rash anger, immoderate cares, inordinate fears, impatient motions, and the like — That this is the meaning of it may be guessed by the 17. verse, *Elias was a Man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed that it might not Rain for three years, and it Rained not:* that is, God shewed such a regard to his Prayers, though he were such a one; now if we interpret it of the *like* passions only in a *natural* sense (so as to have in him joy and fear and the rest that belong to the nature of Man as such, without any thing of Sin) this would be little wonder that his Prayers should be thus heard; there being nothing more agreeable to the divine goodness than to shew a great regard to the petitions of those Creatures that are fully conformed to their Maker's Will,

Will, and have nothing amifs, or offensive in them. But that God should so regard the petitions of one that was subject to the like sinfull passions as we are, this was *wondrous* indeed, and a piece of unspeakable condescension in the most high and holy one: this therefore is most like to be the meaning of it.

And if it were not so, it would be little encouragement to sinfull Creatures, which I verily believe it was especially written for. So that sinfull affections and motions, where they are resisted and opposed, and accompanied with a conscientious course in the main, are no arguments at all that a Man is not among the number of the *Just*. Whatsoever evils there may be, which do only hinder us in the ways of God, but do not ordinarily turn us out of them (or set our hearts against them) all these are not able to disprove our sincerity or  
deprive

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deprive us of Acceptance with our gracious God. The Traveller that resolveth, with God's Assistance, to go to such and such Towns (setting out and proceeding as he ought to doe) though he should be sometimes thrust out of his way, or be forced to carry a Burden that makes him walk slowly and wearily in it, yet is in truth a Traveller towards those places as much as if he went with the greatest ease and speed; so the Christian that makes God his end, and the way of his Commandments his common path to walk in, though he be clogg'd with Sin and compassed with Infirmitie (and many ways hindered in running the Race that is set before him) yet is a Traveller towards Heaven truly so called, and shall one day see that City of God.

*An*

*An Appendix to the 8th. Section,  
being a Character of that Just  
Person whose Soul shall shortly  
be so Happy.*

1. **H**E is an Enemy to unjust  
doings : He loves not the  
Work nor the Wages of Unrighte-  
ousness, but has the great Law of  
[doing as he would be done by]  
written in his heart, and copied  
out in his Conversation. And with-  
out this, a Man can no more be  
called Just, than he can be called  
Wise without Wisdom, or strong  
without strength. This therefore is  
fitter to be premised than proved,  
doubtless the upright Man will walk  
in uprightness.

2. The Just Person is one of a so-  
ber Life : the Wisdom of the Just  
will make a Man so, and not suffer  
him to live like a Sot while he ho-  
peth

peth for the Inheritance of the Saints. The Just Man will be Just to himself, and will not ordinarily doe Sacrifice to a Barrel to escape the Drunkards Songs or Censures He knows his God requires him to watch and be sober (*1 Pet. 5. 8.*) and that it becomes him to be so as he is a Man, much more as a Christian. The grace of God, where once it is a Teacher indeed, teaches the great Lesson of living soberly in this present World, *Tit. 2. 12.*

3. The Just Man is a Godly Man too, and makes Conscience of paying God as well as Man his due. When the Scripture acquaints us that *Zachary* and *Elizabeth* were Righteous People, it saith, *they walked in all the Commandments of the Lord, Luke 1. 6.* 'Twas not the Custom of the World, but the commands of God that they chose to walk by. The Just Man is (without Controversie) a Man of Conscience:

science: and Conscience respecteth  
God as well as Men, yea God in  
the first place, and Men for his sake,  
*Acts 24. 16.* *Herein I do exercise my  
self to have a Conscience void of offence  
towards God and towards Men, and  
Acts 23. 1.* *I have walked in all good  
Conscience before God.* The doors of  
the Temple, or Tabernacle, were  
the Gates of the Lord, and into  
them 'twas said the Righteous shall  
enter (However the Wicked de-  
spise them,) *Psal. 118. 20, 21.* And  
when the Psalmist had said, *Know  
ye that the Lord is God, it is he that  
bath made us, &c.* He presently ad-  
deth — *Enter into his Gates with  
Thanksgiving, and into his Courts  
with Praise, Psal. 100. 3, 4.* As if he  
had said, ye do not acknowledge the  
Lord to be your God, and your  
selves his Creatures to any purpose,  
if ye deny him the Honour of Pub-  
lick Worship and Praise. And in  
the New Testament what can be  
E more



more observable than the zeal that *Jesus Christ* himself, that just one in the highest sense, did shew for the honour of the Temple, the place of publick Service to God, driving the Traders out of it, pouring out the Changers Monies, and overthrowing the Tables therein, *John* 2. 15. It was strange if some spightfull Hypocrites did not censure him very sharply for it, and report him destitute of that meekness that the Servants of God should shew forth; and perhaps it was so: for as he did more than is written in the Gospel, so we have no reason to doubt but he suffered more than is written also.

Surely then the Just Man will be just to his God, and gladly give him, in his constant course, the Glory due unto his Name. If therefore the House of God be unto People as a place of contempt, his Day an idle time with them, and matters of  
vanity

vanity be ordinarily more pleasing to them in it than the exercises of piety: then, (Reader) in spite of all their fairest pretences, and smoothest Speeches, I shall not fear to affirm that their Righteousness and Religiousness are much alike, and that both of them together are no more worth than the honesty of a common Thief, when he hath no opportunity of stealing.

4. He is one that makes Conscience of being<sup>\*</sup> subject to his Governours, and is taught in the fear of God to Honour his King. He desireth not to separate what God hath joyned together, 1 Pet. 2. 17. They are spoken of as some of the worse sort of unjust People, that despise Dominion and speak evil of Dignities, Jude 8.

5. The Just Man is a mercifull Man also. They the Prophet called Righteous are noted to be mercifull too. Esa. 57. 1. *The Righteous*

E 2 *perish,*

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*perish, and mercifull Men are taken away. The Just Man (whom Scripture stileth so) is certainly a good Man: and 'tis the nature of a good Man to have real compassions in his Soul. Yea, he is mercifull to his Beast also: A Righteous Man regardeth the Life of his Beast, Prov. 12. 10.*

6. The Just Man is an humble Man: though he often looketh towards Heaven, yet he is lowly in heart whatsoever his Apparel be, he is cloathed with Humility. God will save the Humble Person, *Job 22. 29* and 'tis the Righteous to whom his Salvation belongeth. *The Salvation of the Righteous is of the Lord, Psal. 37. 39. Every one that is proud in Heart, is an Abomination to the Lord, Prov. 16. 5.* But certainly the Just Man is not so.

7. A Just Man is a Heavenly-minded Person, and would not be a Worldling for all the Earth, and the Sea is worth. Though he  
thank-

thankfully accepteth Earthly Blessings, yet Spiritual and Heavenly are most in his esteem. *They that are after the Spirit do mind (chiefly) the things of the Spirit, Rom. 8 5.* Accordingly the Apostle speaking of the rest of the faithfull as well as himself, saith 2 Cor. 4 18. *We look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen, for the things that are seen are Temporal, but the things that are not seen are Eternal.* Those that elsewhere he so sadly lamented as to weep at the mention of them, (and whose ends were destruction,) were Peop'le that did mind earthly things, *Phil. 3. 18, 19.* that is, they minded these things most, and set their very hearts, as we call it, (upon them.) He that habitually and practically loveth the Riches, Honours, or Pleasures of the World more than God, and the Happinefs that is to be found in enjoying him in a State of perfect Ho-  
E 3      linefs,

liness, is not a Saint for calling himself a Christian, but a foolish Man for accounting himself so. Nor is there any disposition that I know of that is more apparently contrary to the power of Godliness, and the renewed nature of a gracious Soul. He that is more at the command of his Covetousness than of his God and his Conscience, is like to appear amongst the Disobedient at last. Grace it self cannot fit a Man for Happiness any other way, than by gaining his heart to God.

8. The Just Man is so effectually fallen out with Sin, that no Art can reconcile him to any ways of wilfull Wickedness, so as to chuse ordinarily to walk therein, *Prov. 4. 18.* *The Just Man's path is as the Shining Light.* Therefore surely he doth not give himself over to follow the Works of Darkness, nor walk in the way of Damnation. And how can we conceive the contrary without supposing

supposing God's Grace to be given him in vain? For how could he live worse than so, if he were utterly destitute of it? The Scripture describeth God's Righteous Servants by their true devotedness to him, and their unfeigned choice of his ways to walk in (which cannot stand with any common course of known Wickedness,) *Psal.* 119. 38. *Stablish thy word to thy Servant who is devoted to thy Fear.* It was the great evidence of the Grace of God in the *Macedonians* that they gave themselves up unto the Lord, *2 Cor.* 8. 2. 5 The *Psalmist* also setteth forth his Religion by the chief Bent of his Will to it, saying, *I have chosen thy Precepts; I have chosen the way of Truth,* *Psal.* 119. 13. 30. The wicked are Persons of the contrary Character. They did not chuse the fear of the Lord, *Prov.* 1. 24. and, they chose the thing in which he delighted not (*i.e.* the way that he hated) *Esa.* 65. 12.

9. The Just Man in all and above all, hath an Eye to the Just one: he hath his Faith and Love fixed upon that infinitely amiable object *Jesus Christ the Righteous*. If you could give him the uttermost of this World's good, and assure him to keep it (in ease and peace) ten thousand years together, yet Christ is more to him than all this; yea, 'tis as nothing, and vanity in comparison of him. All our Religion, I dare say, is worth very little, if Christ be not more valuable with us than all this World: for else we are Worldlings in Heart, and mind earthly things in such a sad sense, that Destruction is the end it tends to, *Phil.* 3. 18, 19. The Wisdom of the Just will make a Man truly and spiritually acquainted with his own unworthiness, and sinfulness, so as to know for certain that he is by Nature a Child of Wrath, and liable to eternal Damnation, and therefore



fore to see more need of Christ than his Eye hath of Light, or his Body of Breath. His Heart yields assent to that blessed word that shews him to be a Mediatour and Saviour for Sinners, and the Deliverer from the Wrath to come, 1 *Thes.* 1. 10. Yea the Authour of Eternal Salvation, (which infinitely exceeds all temporal good,) *Heb.* 5. 9. And accordingly his People have esteemed of him as the chiefest of ten thousands, as altogether lovely, *Cantic.* 5. 10. 16. St. *Paul's* great desire was to be found in Christ, not having his own Righteousness (to trust to) *Phil.* 3. 9. counting all things, as loss, that he might Win Christ. St. *Peter* also tells us that to them that believe, Christ is precious (that is most precious) 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. For we do, in effect, wholly undervalue him if we prefer any thing of the Earth before him. Thus, Reader, I have given thee the Character of that Just Per-

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son (in Heart and Life) that shall be happy after Death; and if it truly agreesto thee, thou art in some measure happy here, through *Jesus Christ*, and nothing shall make thee miserable. Thou maist (if such) safely lay claim to the comforts of a Christian, and needest not to live like a Fool or a Slave, in fear (I mean) of Poverty and Want, of Scorn and Contempt, of any Adversity or Extremity whatsoever. For to them that walk uprightly : The Lord God himself, is a Sun and a Shield, and will never fail them nor forsake them, *Psal. 84. 11. Heb.*

13. 5.

SECT.

S E C T. IX.

*Shewing the usefulness of the point  
in two other particulars.*

**I**N the next place, it may occasion us to consider the different ends of the Righteous and the Wicked. They may (I grant) be alike in their ends, but they will not be alike afterwards. Though they may die the same kind of Death, yet Death will not be the same to both; the one shall be a gainer by it, and be with Christ; which is far better than any condition here: the other shall be a looser by it, and be in greater misery than any he feared in this World. That which by any means cuts the thread of his Life, casts down also all the Pillars of his hope, *Proverbs 11. 7. When a Wicked!*

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The Wicked  
Man's misery  
after Death.

*Wicked Man dyeth,  
his Expectation shall  
Perish, and the hope  
of unjust Men Pe-  
risheth.* As then he

is deprived of all his Wealth and Honour, Sport and Pleasure, and all that outward good or comfort which here he took any contentment in; so his departed Soul will find nothing to supply the want of them. 'Tis true: It hath to doe with God, but not in a way of mercy and favour; and therefore his presence will not comfort it in the absence of earthly comforts. *The Spirit, says Solomon, returns to God that gave it;* that's spoken of the Spirit, or Soul of Man, in general, whether good or bad. The Spirit of a good Man returneth to God as to a gracious Father, the Spirit of a bad Man as to a Righteous Judge and disposer of it. And we cannot imagine that the Soul of one that  
would

would never return (in a holy sense) in his life time should return to God, in a happy sense, when his life is ended. For he will recompense him according to his ways, saith the Prophet, *and hath revealed his Wrath against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men*, Rom. i. 18. 'Tis said of the unbeliever, so continuing, *that the Wrath of God abideth on him*, John 3: 36. And every ungodly Man (we doubt not) is an unbeliever, in a Scripture sense, though he cares not to think so ill of himself. And what wonder is it if the holy one shew his high displeasure against the departed Soul of that Sinner, that would not Religiously depart from Evil, nor was ever reconciled through Jesus Christ? Now what a dreadful case will this be? What a terrible taking will a guilty Impenitent Soul be in, when it sees it self in the Regions of Eternal Darkness? When it hath lost all comforts

forts and comfortable Expectations, and shall never see any more good : when Money and Lands, when Acquaintance and Friends , when Time and Hope, and all is gone ! O what deep distress, what substantial sorrows will it be filled with, when 'tis compass'd about with miseries unchangeable, and utterly swallowed up (without help or hope) in the depths of God's revenging Wrath ? — Consider of it, Reader, in the fear of God, and never let thy Soul be satisfied without that mercy and grace which may fit thee to escape such a fearfull condition.

2. It may also keep us from wondering at, (or at least from stumbling at) the troubles of true obedient Christians in this World. They come on them, many times, thick and threefold (as we call it) and are so far from moving the careless World to pity them, that they expose them rather (but too commonly)

ly) to the utmost scorn and contempt.

Sometimes also they are ready to Blaspheme (on that occasion) and say, Behold, what good doth all their Godliness do them? For, how miserably do they live? and who is there round about that have more sorrows and grievances than many of those that make so much adoe about Religion? But assuredly all this will not warrant them to despise Religion, or those that love and follow it. For besides other considerations that might be urged, namely, Their remaining sinfulness which maketh the chastisements of their Heavenly Father needfull for them (with that most wise providence and Fatherly love that ordereth and limiteth them) together with the nature of Sin it self that makes them worthy of more and greater sufferings than in this mortal life they can ever bear; *Death eternal being the wages of Sin,*  
Rom.



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Rom 6. 23. I say, besides these and the like considerations that may be urged, the shortness of their troubles, and the certainty of their Souls Happiness after Death, may abundantly satisfy them : and is more than sufficient to countervail the saddest sufferings of this mortal State, (as will farther be evinced by the nature and property of that Felicity, which in its place with God's Assistance I shall endeavour to explicate)

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S E C T. X.

*Being a perswasive to several great Duties.*

**T**HE truth of the present point may be looked on as a true and

and just ground for Christian practices ; and 'tis great pity but People should be somewhat the better for a point of so much comfort and encouragement to Goodness. Here therefore I may fitly endeavour to engage my self and others to the duties following.

I. Patience under God's afflicting hand (whether by outward or inward troubles) Men of ordinary prudence can follow very unpleasant methods of Physick from the meer prospect of that ease and health which they hope, in time, to find by so doing (though none do promise them health, much less assure them of the continuance of it How should a Christian then endeavour (more and more) that patience may have its perfect work, when he foresees by Faith that blessed Rest which his Soul shall have after death hath seized upon his Body ; and hath the word of God to assure him that this  
happi-

happinefs fhall never end, but be compleated at the Refurrection of the juft, when their wafted Bodies fhall forfake their dark Prifons, and *Shine as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*, Mat. 13. 43. He may therefore fay with chearfulnefs as once a worthy Servant of Chrift [Hold out Faith and Patience, for your work will fhortly be at an end.]

2. The Duty of Charity fhould hence be enforced upon us according to our place and power. What if Men be never fo unworthy or unthankfull, yet Chriftians fhould be ready to extend their Charity to them, in any reasonable way, for the fake of that good God who will do them fo much good after death. How can they do lefs than fhew forth real compaffions (on all fit occafions) yea towards their very names, if they find them wronged therein, when they remember their heavenly Father's Love, and confider

der how shortly he will receive their immortal Souls, and Crown them with his tenderest mercies?

3. Upright living in the general : how should this engage a Christian to honour his God what he can, and (as the Apostle exhorts) to do all to his Glory : to live by Faith and walk in Love, and be ready to every good work? For as *Samuel* said, *1 Sam. 12. 24. Serve the Lord in truth with all your heart, for consider what great things he hath done for you ;* How fitly then may I say to such a one, be diligent in thy duty, and lead thy life to the glory of that gracious God who will satisfy thy Soul with his glorious goodness when once it hath left this sinfull World.

4. It should make a Christian willing (yea glad) to glorifie his God by dying for his truth (if providence should call him to it.) Life is sweet, (says the Proverb) and to  
part.

part with it when we can keep it is commonly counted a hard Chapter: and 'tis really a principal part of self denial. But 'tis no more than a Christian ought to be content to practise (though Mr. *Hobbs* his *Leviathan* would render it needless) when God calls him to it, and when he cannot keep his Life without renouncing the truth or doing wickedly some other way ; and as in such cases he should think himself bound to it by Christ's dying for him (whose death was more grievous than the death of any Man else, and whose life was more precious than the life of all created Beings ; ) so he should be encouraged to it by acting his faith upon the truth in hand : for why should he either think it much or think it sad, to part with his life for the honour of that immortal Majesty whose presence and favour is his whole Felicity, and shall surely be to his departed Soul an Ocean  
of

of Eternal Peace and Pleasures?

5. It should move a Christian to be content under the ordinary crosses of this life, and particularly pains and sicknesses and spitefull causeless aspersions and disgraces.

No Affliction (we confess) is in it self joyous but grievous; (and therefore People are not to be blamed for being sensible of them; nor are those kind of Persons wonderful wise, nor yet very charitable, that censure their Neighbours of gross impatience for crying out in an extremity of pain) though, I say, no Afflictions, or those instanced in, are in themselves any other than matters of grievance, yet a Christian has no cause to be discontent or discouraged: for his mind may receive great satisfaction when his Body can receive no ease; and why should he faint at those Tribulations that shall so shortly have an end, and a happy end too?

For

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For however his Body be tired with Sicknesſes, and his Name abuſed by the baſeſt Tongues, yet e're long his Soul ſhall have Reſt enough, yea and credit enough alſo amongſt the excellent Inhabitants of the unſeen-World · when once it hath put off its Earthly Tabernacle.

6. It ſhould move Chriſtian Parents to take care of their Childrens ſpiritual welfare, and ſee that they be brought up in the Knowledge of God, and the Inſtructions of that ſacred word, *Which is able to make them Wiſe to Salvation*, 2 Tim 3. 15. And ſo tends to prepare them for a happy immortality when this mortal life is paſſed away.

S E C T.



S E C T. XI.

*Containing the Resolution of two great Questions.*

**I** thought to have gone on in the smooth track of duties and comforts arising from the Doctrine in hand : but on second thoughts I was willing to resolve (so far as the giving my opinion of) some Queries relating to the present point.

1. *Whether the Souls of the just after Death, do go so immediately and directly to Heaven (or are so confined and limited) as to have nothing to do e at any time in this lower World?*

2. *Whether the Rest and Joy which they have after Death be perfect or not?*

Con-

Concerning these I desire the Reader to be of my mind no farther than he can see some reason for it. As to the former, the most common opinion (I think) is, that such departed Souls have no more to doe with any on Earth, or have no presence with them (nor appearance to them) at any time, or on any account.

But with me the saying of it, without the proving of it signifies but little: and I know no Argument they bring for it that my reason is satisfied in. I therefore conceive the contrary to be true: [that holy Souls after death may be at some times, and on some occasions, present with Men in this World, appear to them and converse with them] (though I believe it is not ordinary, nor ought to be expected by any.) And since there's no better way to prove a thing may be, than to prove that it hath been; I shall therefore offer

offer what to me seemeth considerable for that purpose. And first: That Text of St. *Matthew* 17 3. *There appeared* (says the Evangelist) *unto them Moses and Elias talking with them.* — *Moses* then appeared at Christ's Transfiguration: now we read that *Moses* dyed, and was buried in the Land of *Moab*, *Deut.* 34. 5. And if then he appeared in his Body, he must have been raised from the Dead at that time: but Scripture tells us no such thing, which in all probability it would have done if it had been so. There is therefore as great a probability that he then appeared in his Soul only. And I find the Reverend Bishop *Hall* (in *Contempl. on the Transfiguration*) express himself in this sort; [*Moses* did then appear, but whether in the Body, or out of the Body I cannot tell.] Thereby granting the latter might be as well as the former: and it is no absurdity

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dity for me to suppose that possible which so excellent an Author judged so.

If any should ask, how can a Soul being a spiritual substance, appear in the World? perhaps I may answer (in like manner) I cannot tell: and if I, nor others cannot tell the manner of it, yet that disproves not the reality of the thing. I know the Spider makes his Web, yet I do not tell Men (nor they me) how he makes it, nor yet of what matter. And if such Cavillers would tell us how Angels do appear (that are as far from all essential corporeity, as the Souls of Men) we might the easier shew them how Souls may appear. And thus much also I will add, that an eminent Divine assured me that the best Philosophers he knew were of opinion, that the Souls of Men removed from their Natural Bodies, are embodied (as it were) in Aerial Vehicles; and that he himself

self was of the same Judgment.

2. That of *Samuel* appearing to *Saul*, (1 *Sam.* 28. 12, 13, 14.) may fitly be urged. For the Scripture gives no cause to believe that *Samuel's* Body was then raised from the Dead, (nor do I find Expositors supposing such a thing) it may therefore well be thought it was *Samuel* in *Soul* only. For the context seems to evince that it was *Samuel* really: The Apparition being called by no other name, as oft as 'tis mentioned, — vers 12. *When the Woman saw Samuel*, vers 14. *And Saul perceived it was Samuel*; and thrice more in the other verses 'tis so called. I know the contrary minded will have *Samuel* to be meant of somewhat else, either the Witches Familiar, or *Satan* in his shape, or some cunning piece that was to deceive *Saul* with I know not what extraordinary Arts and Tricks, (as Mr. *Scott* and Mr. *Webster* are wil-

ling we should think.) But if this be a warrantable way of interpreting Scripture, I shall hardly know what is not ; and let any intelligent Person judge whether by such a way of interpreting, the plainest History in Scripture (or elsewhere) may not be spoiled ; And let it be remembered that *He* that called it *Samuel* so often was the holy Pen-man of that part of Scripture. And the Letter is to be insisted on, if there be nothing in that context, or in other Scripture, to enforce the contrary ; I am also the proner to think there is no such thing, when I consider the insufficiency (if I much mistake not) of the best Answers that are given by Writers of great Judgment and Acuteness in other matters : as *Dr. Willet, Chamierus*, and the *Anti-Racovianist Nichol. Arnoldus* in his Notes upon the place. Whose Answer being brief, (and yet the substance of what the others say)

say) I shall (with due respect to his Name and Works) humbly take leave to examine. Well then : It must not be thought that it was *Samuel* in *his Soul*, that there had to doe with *Saul*. This the learned Author will not grant, and gives the following reasons as (1) *Quia sic subjectus fuisset Pythoniæ* : Because (says he) if so, he should have been Subject to the Witch of *Endor* ; whereas such a Servant of God was not, in his Soul subject to her.

*Reply.* True indeed : He was not thus subject to her, nor doth that Scripture imply any such thing. For it is not said that *Samuel* came at her command ; yea the contrary is intimated : for when he that is called *Samuel* appeared, the *Woman* ('tis said) *cry'd out with a loud voice* : a sign she was surpris'd, by seeing what she was not wont to see (and



perhaps before she had gone over all the methods of her Inchantments,) doubtless the appearance of her Familiar in humane shape (or any thing else that was usual in her Magical Contrivances) was not like to have been such an Afrightment to her.

2. Ans. — *Passus est se Adorari*, &c. The *Samuel* here, (says he) suffered *Saul* to worship him. But true *Samuel*, though in *Soul* only, would not have suffered such a thing.

*Reply.* Indeed the holy Soul of *Samuel* would not have consented to such a thing : but 'tis possible for it (for ought I know) to have suffered such a thing. The best of God's Servants, in some cases may let a Sin pass without a formal reproof. (Not to espouse the opinion of those that say, Duty properly respects the Person, not a part of him. *Lex datur personis.*) 2. How knows any Man

Man that this apparition did not reprove *Saul* for *Worshipping* it if he did so indeed : For there is no necessity of supposing that not to have been done, which the Scripture doth not say *was* done. We read of our Saviour, that he did many things (meaning, no doubt, many great and wonderfull ones) that are not written, or recorded, *John* 21. And whereas some conceive that *Saul's* act was only an act of reverence and respect, and not of worship or adoration, they are like enough to be in the right ; and I am confident the expression (in the 14 verse) [*He stoopt with his Face to the ground, and bowed himself*] doth not enforce the contrary.

His 3<sup>d</sup>. Anf. *Quia Sauli non Respondebat*, &c. Because (says he) God refused to Answer *Saul* by any of the Prophets then living : much less then would he do it by the dead, and *Luke*. 16. Such a thing was de-

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nied to the rich Man that requested it.

*Reply.* That saying [The Lord answered him not] may, according to the scope of the place, be interpreted of answering *Saul*, as he expected, or in a comfortable way as t'was said to a wicked People, *When ye make many Prayers, I will not hear*, *Esay. i. 15.*

And though *Luk. 16.* we are taught to attend to the Scripture, and not to expect information from Saints departed; yet this hinders not but that the Soul of a Saint in an *extraordinary* case, may have some converse with the living in this World. And I have read in a good Author, that some of those Angels that Scripture tells us appeared to People, were probably the Spirits of Just Men, called Angels only from their Office of Message and Ministration. Thus Reader, I have given thee my thoughts in this matter :

ter : and if thou shewest me that I have erred herein, I shall willingly owe thee, and pay thee, my thanks. And if I am (herein) out of the way, yet I am not alone : some of my betters are of the same mind, and particularly the famous Philosopher and Divine *Dr. Henry More*.

I shall now only (as to this) add a remarkable History (mentioned by a good Author) as followeth [One *Mr. Watkinson* a Religious Man had a Daughter, whom he dearly loved, married to a Man at *York* (He then living in *London*) She came several times to visit her Father : and the last visit she made, she said, at parting, that she feared she should never see him more in this World. To which he answered, if he died before her, in case God would permit : the Dead to see the Living, he would surely see her once more.

When he had been dead about half a year, in a night when she

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could not sleep, the Chamber grew lighter and lighter ; and being perfectly awake, she saw her Father stand by her, who called her as he used to do, saying [*Did I not tell you I would see you again ?*] She called him Father, and talked of many things. He bad her be Patient, and Dutifull to her Mother ; He also bad her speak what she desired at that time, because he must shortly leave her ; and then he should meet her no more till they met in the Kingdom of God : and so at length the Chamber grew darker, and he was gone.]

I know very well that Men of large Consciences have a very narrow belief of matters of this nature, (for the most part.) And I doubt not but the Atheistical Leviathanists of this Age are ready to laugh at such a Relation ; but I dare say, 'tis not the less credible for that. For as it was the substance of a Letter  
written

written to a Doctor of Divinity, so 'tis recorded by a very ingenious, and judicious Author Mr. *Joseph Glanvil*, with these words at the end of it [I was told this with great assurance by Dr. *Rust*, afterwards Bishop of *Dromore*, and was not credulous in these things.] Now though these Men had a design to promote the interest of Religion, yet 'tis verily thought they were not so unwise or unworthy as to endeavour it by frivolous and ungrounded reports. (Thus to the first Question )

Quest. 2. *Whether the Rest and Joy of Just Mens Souls in their separated State, be perfect or not ?*

Ans. This is proposed by several Writers, and particularly *Buchan. in Loc. Com.* and *Alstedius in Theol. Polemicâ* : and is determined in the Negative. *Inchoatâ Beatitudine, &c.* Others

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thers use the word *Incompleta*. They enjoy (say these) the beginning of Blessedness, or an imperfect Blessedness—Those that like this Notion (for me) may make the most of it, and reap all the comfort that it can afford : for my part I must needs say I do not admire it. And now I shall take leave to declare my Sentiments herein (with submission to better Judgments, and a Willingness to be farther informed.) And (1.) by way of Concession : I grant that the perfection of happiness, properly so called, or in respect of the *Compositum*, or whole Man, is reserved to the day of Judgment. *Then the Lord will give his Righteous Servants the Crown of Righteousness, and the eternal weight of Glory, as St. Paul speaketh.*

(2.) I grant there is a state of Christians in this Life that may be called a Blessedness, which yet is accompanied with no small imperfection,



fection, because they daily lodge an Enemy of God, and have sin dwelling in them. *If we say we have no sin we deceive our selves.*

But (3.) that a holy Soul after death has not the perfection of Happiness, or less of Happiness than it needeth or desireth, this I cannot comply with. Here therefore I shall attempt to prove that the departed Souls of the Just are in a State of perfect Happiness, and have all that spiritual comfort from the God of all comfort, which on any account they have need of, (and such a Happiness I think we may justly call perfect, and is all that I wish to my own Soul in its absence from the Body.)

Now (for this) let us consider the state of Sanctified Souls after their removal from their Bodies. They have certainly Life, and Sense, and Knowledge, and all the essential perfections that belong to them

as spiritual substances. St. Stephen (doubtless) would not have said (when his Enemies were killing him) *Lord Jesus, Receive my Spirit*, if he had not believed that his Soul shou'd continue in its spiritual Being after his Body was dead. Now the Souls of such, if they have not all the Happiness that they *need*, then they must know so much or not ; if we say they do *not* know it, we shall hardly prove that they know any thing else : and so comply with the Socinian Dream, of the Souls sleeping after death.

And (in reason) what are they more like to know than their own State ? But if then they know themselves destitute of any Happiness that they need, that knowledge must be matter of trouble and dissatisfaction unto them ; and so (at that rate) the Souls of the Just shall be in part really unhappy, which those that judge of them by the Scriptures will not believe. 2. If

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2. If in their separated State they have a perfect enjoyment of God, they must be perfectly happy : (by the confession of all those that know wherein Happiness consisteth.) And that in that State they have a perfect enjoyment of God, is ( one would think ) no hard matter to make evident. For nothing but sin can hinder the Soul from a perfect Communion with God, and comfort in Him. The Prophet tells the People of nothing but their *Iniquities that could separate between them and their God* (he means apparently in point of comfort, *Esay. 59. 2.* But their iniquities (we have seen already) do not follow them into the other World ; their Souls are not under the defilements of sin, when they leave the Body and go into the glorious presence of the holy one. The Apostle calls them *the Spirits of Just Men made perfect*, *Heb. 12.* and the Psalmist tells us *no evil shall dwell with him.*

3. To

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3. To be ever with the Lord, (in his special glorious presence) is spoken of as the very top of our Felicity, and the principal matter of a Christian's Comfort, *1 Thes. 4. 17, 18.* And this Happiness the departed Spirits of the Just do partake of --- *To depart and be with Christ* says *St. Paul, Phil. 1. 23.* and in *2 Cor. 5. 8. Desiring rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.* If therefore the one proveth the complete Happiness of the whole Man as such, the other as well proveth the perfect Happiness of the Soul as such. Go on therefore, O Faithfull Christian, in thy Christian course, with Faithfulness and Diligence, with Christian courage and Resolution: and let thy Soul magnifie the Lord, for it shall shortly want for no Felicity.

S E C T.

S E C T. XII.

*Treating of the Nature of this  
Happiness, and the Joy that at-  
tends it.*

**B**EING come unto these points I am in the depths indeed : and may well say, as St. Paul, *who is sufficient for these things?* But having engaged in this Service, 'tis fit I should go on with it, and perform it as God shall enable me.

Here then, I am to consider the happy privileges of a Sanctified Soul in its state of Separation.

And (1.) its Sanctification ; I mean full and perfect by which it is freed from all the evil of sin for the present, and all the danger of it for the future, as the Apostle calls them, *the Spirits of just Men made perfect,*  
Heb.

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(Heb. 12. 23.) That this is meant of the Souls of the faithfull, is generally granted (and 'tis common in Scripture for the Soul to be spoken of under the name of Spirit : *The dust (the Body) shall return to the Earth, but the Spirit shall return to God that gave it, Eccles. 12. 7.*) And St. Stephen in like sort commended his Soul to his Saviour, *Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit, Acts. 7. 59.* And, in that Text to the *Hebrews* [*The Spirits of Just Men*] can signifie nothing but their Souls, because mention is made of Angels in the verse before, from whom therefore they are plainly distinguished. And [*their being made perfect*] must needs be meant, of perfection in Grace and Holiness : for as to any perfection in a natural sense, they had it as much before in this World (yea the state of the Soul in its Separation, without the perfection of Grace in it, may be thought to be a state of greater

greater imperfection than before it was in.) Now ponder with thy self, Reader, of this particular, and think what a blessed condition this must be.

If he is stiled *Blessed, whose Iniquity is forgiven*, Psal. 32. 1. How Blessed then may they be accounted that have all their Iniquities pardoned, and removed also? What a Happiness is it, to be freed from all possibility of sinning? If St. Paul so much lamented the In-being of Sin, complaining *that when he would do good, evil was present with him*, (Rom. 7.) and called himself *Wretched Man* for that very reason. How glad (may we think) would he have been, if at that very hour, he could have assured himself that he should never be troubled with it any more? a privilege which after death his Soul was perfectly instantiated in. If the poor Man that I have read of, was so much delighted to behold



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behold the Face of that Physician that had cured him of his fainting Sleeps, and frightfull Dreams; O then with what transcendent Joy and Gladness will a gracious Soul reflect upon the Love of its Redeemer, when he hath freed it from all degrees of sinfulness, and healed all its Infirmities for ever! Oh what sacred and satisfying Irradiations will it receive from the Sun of Righteousness, when the Spirit of Glory hath perfected all its Graces, and delivered it from all the darkness of sin! And in being free from sin, it shall be free from all other evils (as he that is freed from his Debt is secured from all arrests and troubles that relate to it) for whatsoever our God may be pleased to doe out of Sovereignty (and without respect to his Creature's sin) as 'tis supposed *Job's* Afflictions came on him in that way: Yet Divines agree that God did never lay Affliction

tion on his People but while they had sin dwelling in them ; so that the Souls of his Servants, after Death, are rid of all other evil, as well as of sin. They shall then be no more disturbed by any Enemies of their Peace ; the Regions of the unseen World they are then in, shall be always Serene : The Ocean of Eternity shall be calm and comfortable to them ; Then they shall have no more to do with the Temptations of *Satan*, the Mocks of the Profane, the Snarls and Censures of proud-hearted Hypocrites. These shall follow the upright no farther than the Grave : *For their end is Peace*, Psal. 37. 37. How sound and substantial will the Soul's Joy be when it sees it self safe in the Arms of God's Love, beyond the sphere of sin and sorrow? which should move it to bear the more contentedly the Troubles and Temptations of this Transitory Life.

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In particular, the gracious Soul shall then have the excellencies that are most essential to true Happiness, and be perfected in the Knowledge and love of God in Christ. *St. Paul* himself, though he knew much more of Christ than most ever did, or shall do in this World, and had the Revelations of things too great to be uttered, (2 Cor. 12.) Yet his knowledge had a real imperfection at the same time. *We know but in part*, 1 Cor. 13. 9. and *vers. 12.* *Now I know in part*, but (as it follows) *then I shall know as I am known.* I will not play the Critick on that phrase, nor search curiously into the depths of it: 'tis, for our purpose, clear enough; for it must be meant of *perfection* of knowledge, because 'tis opposed to a knowing in *part*. If any say it is to be understood especially of the state at the Resurrection, I shall not gainsay it. But I see not why it may not be applied

plied also to the Soul in its Separation. For as the particle [*Now*] doth confessedly denote the state of this Life, so the particle [*Then*] doth as plainly intimate any time or state after this Life ended. And he might express it so if it were properly and primarily meant of the Soul, in its Separation from the Body: As when he said (*Phil. 1.*) *I desire to depart and be with Christ.* Which [*Being with Christ*] is confessedly intended in respect of his *Soul*. Nor is it easie to conceive how his Soul's being with Christ after Death, should be so much a better condition than any in this Life, if therein it had not perfection in the Knowledge and Love of Christ: For on Earth he had a great measure of them, and was daily tending forwards towards perfection, and was assured that nothing should separate him from the Love of Christ, (*Rom. 8.*)

Surely

Surely therefore a holy Soul will not want for knowledge when it has left the World. How can it be any thing less than perfectly light in the Lord, when it shall be perfectly and gloriously present with him? And who is able to tell us what a Joy and Blessedness this must be? If I could know my God and Saviour with such a powerfull, spiritual and affecting knowledge as some good Men have had on Earth, my heart should be glad and my spirit rejoyce, though I were utterly despised in the World, and had not one hours health all the days of my Life; yet all their knowledge here was imperfect (as we have seen;) And how much better shall that state be where all sinfull imperfections shall be done away? If the Mystery of Christ and Salvation by him, be such a glorious thing *that the Angels of Heaven desire to look into it,* (1 Pet. i. 12.) O then what abundant matter  
of

of satisfaction and joy will it yield to all those blessed Souls to whom it doth really and eternally belong? and to whom the worth and excellency of it (with their interest in it) is fully discovered by the Spirit of Grace and Revelation.

2. Another privilege that holy Souls shall have after their departure hence, is their Company.

They shall then converse with the best of Creatures, and such as never offended their good God, I mean the Holy Angels: After Death they shall be (as it were) made Free of that Company, and see themselves Members of that Blessed Society united in, and under, the same Head Christ Jesus. Now (indeed) if they should see but one of those immortal Spirits standing before them with his Crown of Glory, compassing them about with a Light brighter than that of the Sun, offering to draw nigh unto them, and

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asking

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asking to joyn with them in the Praises of the great *Jehovah* ; such a sight probably would more astonish them than rejoyce them ; because the sense of their sinfulness might cast a Damp upon their Hearts, and make them unfit for the heavenly employment : But it shall be otherwise with their Souls when they are fully conformed to their Maker's Will, and as free from sin as the Angels of his presence ; for the Angels of Heaven and the Spirits of Just Men made perfect, are Members of that happy Society which Divines use to call the Church Triumphant ; and therefore are related to one another by a far nearer and nobler Relation than that of Fellow Creatures, of which the learned may consult *Polanus* (in *Syntag.*) and *H. Altingii Theol. Nov. problemat.* p. 616. In a word, they are called in the Gospel *Their Angels*, Math. 18. 10.

And



And we cannot think that those blessed Spirits above that have ministered to them, and (by Gods appointment) took charge of them, and especially, rejoiced at their Conversion, (*Luke 15. 10.*) I say, we cannot think they will do any thing less than joyfully congratulate their safe Arrival at the state of perfect purity and peace: and chiefly as it is the proper Fruit of the Will of God, and the purchase of his Christ. Surely the holy Inhabitants of the best World, will not be strange to Holy Souls when they come into it; nor are they like the foolish Hypocrites of the Earth that delight to shew themselves proud and scornfull, and look with an evil eye upon the welfare of others.

3. As I question not a Holy Communion and Converse between the Angels of God, and the perfected Spirits of the Just, so hitherto I can as little doubt their knowledge of

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one another and their satisfaction in each others Happiness: (in their state of Separation) at least, and especially, those of them that were before more nearly related, and were wont to join together in God's Service and Praises here on Earth. For it was the design of Christ, to bring his People into a nearer Union with each other, as well as himself: [*that they may be one as we are one,* John 17. 22.] And those Arguments Divines bring for the Saints knowledge of one another after the Resurrection, may seem almost as strong for their Souls Acquaintance with one another, in their absence from their Bodies. The Scripture speaking of the death of the faithfull says, that (therein) they are gathered to their Fathers (the holy Patriarchs and other their Religious Predecessors.) But they are not gathered to them in respect of their Bodies, therefore in respect of their Souls.

4. Holy

4. Holy Souls after Death shall be with Christ, *Phil. 1. 23. When absent from the Body, they are present with the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 8.* And oh what a thing is this! 1. [To be with Christ] (in his special and blissfull presence, to know, love and enjoy him fully, clearly, continually; as the same Apostle maketh it the Crown of all Comforts, *To be forever with the Lord, 1 Thes. 4. 17.*) Thus, I say, *to be with Christ* must needs be a matter of purest and perfectest Joy to a Christian's Soul. Oh that thou couldest fully understand (good Reader) the preciousness of such a privilege!

But, Alas I want words to express it, much more a heart to conceive it: I am my self too little a Christian to tell thee the sweetness of this Consolation, to discover the depths of this purest River of the Water of Life. If the holy Apostle could solace himself in the hope of

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having the Company of his converts at *Rome* ; If the Lord Chancellor of *England* (in the Reign of King *Henry* the 8th.) was so much delighted to see in *London* the *Florentine* Merchant that (in some difficult cases) had befriended him beyond Sea ; (the expressions of whose joy and gratitude were so memorable, that the Learned Dr. *Hakwell*, thought good to record them, in his Apology of God's power and providence ; ) If the Hearts of the weak have gathered strength, and revived to admiration at the coming of some eminent unexpected Friends : (though these were but dying Dust, and had not any degree of comfort absolutely at their command : ) How unspeakably then must a gracious Soul be refreshed, and most superlatively satisfied, by the presence and favour of that immortal Majesty who suffered Death, and the Curse to make it happy ?

Surely

Surely it must needs be an inestimable benefit to be in the happiest manner, *present with him* who is the King of Glory, the Consolation of *Israel*, the joy of Angels, and the Saviour of the World.

This therefore, as he was a Mediatour, was his great desire for his People, *That they might be with him where he is*, John 17. 24. The joy of which we may a little guess at by the things that shall accompany this their *Presence* with him.

As (1.) a full Deliverance from all Doubts and Fears, and all things that may cause, or occasion them. Here how hard a thing was it for them to get an assurance of their interest in Christ, and Salvation by him? and when they had it, t'was no easie matter to maintain and preserve it: yea the best on Earth are not so privileged, but that if they be not carefull and watchfull over themselves, they may fall into such sins

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as may darken all their evidences for Heaven, and deprive them of the Joy of their Salvation. It was *David's* case, *Psal.* 51. But when once their Souls come to dwell with Christ, then they shall be ever secured from all possibility of doubting about their spiritual and eternal welfare : no such sad mist can cloud that Soul which lives under the Rayes of the Sun of Righteousness : Here as they may have assurance, so they may loose it again. But to be with Christ is far better, in that respect : and they then Rest from their Labours (from all that may be tedious and tiresome unto them,) *Rev.* 14. 13.

2. Their *Presence* with the Lord (in *St. Paul's* sense) will set them free from all manner of cares : not only from disorderly and distrustfull cares, but also from all natural, necessary, and prudential cares, which their present state doth expose them to :

to : And the reason is plain, because then their Souls are above all wants and necessities : They want not for Monies when they are fully possesse of the riches of Christ ; They want for no Friendship and good Company, when they are happily joyned to the whole Family of Heaven. They take no care for Food or Sleep, when they enjoy him who is the Bread of Life, and partake of that eternal Rest which he hath purchased for them.

3. In a word; Then they shall be freed from taking any care about doing their Duty, and pleasing their God : For the *Difficulty* of Duty will then be over, and the *Comfort* of it only shall remain. When they thus dwell with the holy one, they shall be fully framed to his holy Will. To love God in perfection, and delight in him, (without which Heaven it self cannot make us happy.) These things (I say) will be as natu-



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ral and easie to holy Souls after death, as it is to a thirsty man to drink, or to the eye to behold the desired Light; There being no sin then remaining in them, to alienate and estrange them from their gracious God, (as hath been already proved.)

And as their Being with Christ secureth them from all Trouble, so it shall afford them the truest and strongest Consolation: and that on these following grounds. 1. Because they shall then see Christ to be their Own for ever: And in all their knowledge of him they shall know him to be *Theirs*. Propriety is in it self a pleasant thing: with what content do Men many times speak even of those outward (insufficient) comforts which they can truly call *their own*. *My Mony and my Lands, my Relations and my Friends, &c.* Do usually sound with an *Accent* of Pleasure. O what blessed Delight then, must a pious Soul

Soul be elevated with, when it dwells with Christ in a better World? What Triumphant exultation will it be filled with, when it can say (with full assurance) *My Rock and my Refuge, my Lord and my King, my God and my Saviour, my great High Priest and my Redeemer!*

2ly. When they are with Christ (in the sense aforesaid) they shall possess the eternal Treasure, and know (perfectly) *the Love of Christ which passeth knowledge*, Eph. 3. 19. The very *Being* with him, necessarily implies the enjoying of his Love, (as the *Departing* from him, imports the want of it, *Mat. 7. 23.*) And how great a Happiness must that be? And though I cannot comprehend it, yet I may fitly take occasion to consider it: and it shall be the substance of the following Section.

## S E C T. XIII.

*Shewing the Greatness of the Love  
of Christ, which the Souls of his  
People shall enjoy after Death.*

**W**ithout this, my small Book would be too small, and would speak me guilty of too great an oversight to be handsomly excused. For how should I make good its Title Page, of the Joy of Just Mens Souls after Death, if I should not treat of that Love of his, which shall surely be their Glory and Joy?

And though it may be somewhat difficult to resolve in what method to discourse of his unmeasurable Love, yet I think the main of what concerns me to say, may be reduced to these two Heads.

I. *What*

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1. *What Christ is, in Himself.*

2. *What he hath done and suffered for Sinners.*

First, let us consider (for this purpose) *what Christ is in himself.* For, as it was said of old, as the Man is, such is his Strength; so we may say herein, as the Person is, such is his Love; the more excellent any Person is, the more excellent and valuable is his Kindness, in what way soever it be expressed towards his Inferiours. It were a greater matter for one that is a King, to hazard his Health for the good of any People, than for an ordinary Person to venture his Life for them.

Now on this account, the Love of Christ towards Sinners, must needs be worthy of everlasting Admiration, because he was a Person of infinite excellency, the Eternal Son of God, of the same substance with his heavenly

heavenly Father.] Reader, I be-  
 seech thee, Hold fast this Principle,  
 and part not with it as thou lovest  
 the life of thy precious Soul. For  
 the contrary opinion is not only an  
 errour, but such an errour as stri-  
 keth at the very heart of Christiani-  
 ty, and overthrows the very Foun-  
 dation of our Faith. 'Tis not my  
 present Design to prove this at large,  
 (yet something shall be said of it in  
 due place.) And (by the way) we  
 may perceive how necessary the  
 Knowledge of it is, by considering  
 that of our Saviour, *Mat. 16. 13.*  
 He asked his Disciples, *Whom do*  
*Men say that I the Son of Man am :*  
*q. d.* They are very well satisfied  
 that I am indeed the Son of Man,  
 true and very Man (as really as  
 any of you is ; ) But what do they  
 think of my Person ? Do they take  
 me to be a *Humane* Person, and so  
 no more than a Man, or the Son of  
 Man ? To which the Disciples an-  
 swered,

swered, *Some say, Thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, &c.* (Persons very eminent, and as great in God's account as any of the Sons of Men.) But yet they did not therein think highly enough of him; and therefore, *vers. 15.* He asked his Disciples, *Whom say ye that I am?* To which Peter, in the name of the rest, giveth answer saying, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,* *vers. 16.* which Answer Christ so well approved of, that he pronounced him blessed, *vers. 17.* and intimated this Truth to be the Rock on which the Church is built: and assureth him, that against it the Gates of Hell shall not prevail, *vers. 18.*

And now that [his being the Son of the living God] (which he took to himself so apparently) is meant of being his *Son* properly, by eternal and unspeakable Generation, of the same substance with his Father. This (I say) is now to be cleared and confirmed,

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confirmed, and it may be so from those Scriptures wherein he is called, *The Son of the Father*, 2 John 3. *His own Son*, Rom. 8. *His only begotten Son*, John 3. *who had Glory with the Father before the World was*, Joh. 17. 5. *who thought it no Robbery to be* (or declare himself to be) *equal with God*, (viz. God the Father) Phil. 2. Titles certainly too high for any mere Creature (whatever *Satan* and *Socinians* suggest to the contrary.) The *Jews* supposed him guilty of Blasphemy, because he being a Man, made himself God (that is, declared himself so to be) which they did not charge him with, on any other ground than his owning himself to be the Son of God, John 5. 18. 10. 33. compared with Mark 14, 61, 64. And if our Saviour had not been the Son of God in such a sense as imported him to be true and very God (as the *Jews* conceived him to mean,) there is no doubt but he would



would have shewed them their mistake, yea quickly too, and have disowned that Title (in the sense that they took it) being Lowly in Heart, and filled with the highest Zeal for his Father's Glory.

And that he was not called the Son of God, upon the account of his miraculous conception, or any privileges that a meer Creature may partake of (as too many would perswade us) may be easily manifested on these two grounds. 1. Because he was the Son of God before these things could be said of him. As (in the fullness of time) he came of the Lineage of *David*, according to the Flesh, and was called the Son of *David*: So before his Incarnation, he was *David's* Lord. *David* in Spirit called him Lord, Mat. 22. 43. compared with *Psal.* 110. 1. Surely therefore he was a Person in *David's* time: And what Person was he then? Surely the same that now he is,

is, even the Son of God : The same in all times past, present, and to come, *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and forever*, H. 13. Nor do I yet find that the *Socinians* themselves ever were so senseless as to say, that Christ was the Son of Man, or one of the Angels, in *David's* time. (And if then he were not a Humane Person, nor an Angelical Person : what remains but that he was a *Divine* Person at that time, (& therefore at all times.) In a word, he was then such a Son as the same Kingly Prophet calls upon Men to *trust* in, and calls them blessed that do so, *Psal. 2. 12.* and therefore God the Son, of the same substance with his Father (and so above the rank of meer creatures, for to trust in a meer creature, is so far from blessedness that it is in it self an accursed thing, *Jer. 17. 5.*

2. Such things are said of Christ, the Son of God as no temporal excellencies, privileges, or qualifications

tions can possibly entitle him to : as, To have his outgoings from everlasting, *Micah* 5. 2. compared with *Mat.* 2. 6. To be the First and the Last, *Rev.* 1. To have all things consist in him (or by him) *Col.* 1. To have all things created by him, and for him, *Col.* 1. 16. Not to insist on those places where he is called God absolutely, and solemnly, see *John* 20. 28. and *Heb.* 1. 8. *Unto the Son he saith, Thy Throne O God is for ever and ever.*

If any can convince me, that all this will not prove Christ to be the Son of God, in a higher sense and manner than any temporal privileges, or created excellencies can make him to be, they then may have hope enough to make me believe that my Right Hand is my Left, or any other piece of the profoundest Non-sense, that their pretended Right Reason can impose upon me. Yet it being a matter  
above

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above the reach of natural Reason, I must say, (with him in the Gospel) *Lord I believe, Help thou my unbelief.* They that would see more on this great subject, may consult *Stegman-photin Refut. Disp. 5. quæst. 7. Jacobi ad part. Def. Fidei.* and especially the acute *Thalyæus* in *Anat. Samosat. quæst. 2.*

And whereas some do much urge *Luke. 1. 35.* to prove that Christ was the Son of God, by reason of his miraculous Conception, because 'tis immediately added. [*Wherefore also that holy thing that shall be Born of Thee, shall be called the Son of God.*] This I say, will not serve their purpose: And if from hence they could make such a knot as we could not untie, yet that would not make the matter e're the clearer on their side. And whether we can search the depth of that sacred Text or no, yet we may soon be perswaded that this his miraculous conception was  
not

not the chief reason of his being, or being called, the Son of God. For if so, he must have been the *Son of the Holy Ghost*, because *this* work is peculiarly ascribed to *him* in the foregoing verse. But *Christ*, we are told, is the *Son of the Father*, John 2. 3. and the Holy Ghost is the *Spirit of the Son*, Gal. 4. 6.

2. If Christ was the Son of God, on account of his miraculous conception, then he began to be so when that began : But 'tis not so (certainly) For he was the Son of God long before, and was so called, *Psal.* 2. 7. 12. and he had Glory with his Father before the World was, *Joh.* 17. 5.

He was therefore the Eternal Son of the Father (as our Church speaketh) on account of an eternal and unspeakable Generation And being a Person of infinite Dignity, his Love must needs be of infinite value; so that the utmost conceivable kindness

ness of all the Angels in Heaven, (if they were as many as the drops in the Sea, and the Sands on the Shore) would be utterly inconsiderable in comparison of *His*, and exceed the Understandings of mortal Men, almost as far as it doth their Deservings, (which by the next Section may farther appear.)

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## S E C T. XIV.

*Discovering the Greatness of Christ's Love, in what he did, and suffered for Sinners.*

**T**hat the sense of the love of Christ, will be the special matter of the joy of Just Mens Souls after Death, will easily be granted, and may in its place be farther proved : At present

sent I think it my Duty, and full enough to my purpose, to set forth the greatness of his Love, in the great things that he did and suffered for Sinners sake. And first, I may fitly instance in *his* taking our nature into unity with his own Divine Person, so as to become true and very Man, like unto us, *Sin* excepted. If St. *John* so much admired that such as we should be called the Sons of God (by Adoption,) *Behold what manner of Love is this?* 1 *John* 3. 1. How then may we wonder at that *Love* that moved the Son of God from Everlasting, to become the Son of *Man* in *Time*? What a height of kindness and condescension was that which moved the most High and Holy one to stoop so low for our sakes and Salvation? Sure the utmost kindness that the best of Creatures can have towards us, in comparison of this Love of Christ, is but as a drop to the Sea,

- or



or as a Mote in the Sun to the whole frame of Nature.

For let us but think with our selves what a wondrous thing it was that the Son of God should vouchsafe to take our Nature on him, and be made in the likeness of sinfull Flesh, *Rom. 8. 3.* well may we say in this as the Psalmist doth, *Lord, what is Man that thou art mindfull of him?* For the Nature of Man that is corrupt with sin, and subject to the darkness of the Grave, what is this, (I say) to him who is the Light of the City of God, and had Glory with the Father before the World was, *John 17. 5.* Thus therefore to assume our Nature, might seem a matter infinitely *below* him, but that his love thought *nothing* so. And as he took Humane Nature to himself, so in it he did those excellent things that expressed the greatness of his *Love* towards Men, and the care he took of their eternal Salvation.

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Salvation. *He came into the World to save Sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. He went about doing good, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and working the most absolute uncontrollable miracles for Confirmation of his holy Doctrine, leading them in the way to Heaven by his own blessed example, bearing patiently the greatest Slanders, and suffering the contradictions of Sinners against himself, *Heb. 12. 3.* Overcoming daily their evil with good, and inviting them to himself to come unto him, that they might have Life. And the eminency of his Love and Goodness, will be especially visible in the evils that he suffered, and voluntarily exposed himself to for the sake of Sinners; which, being compared with the excellency and innocency of his Person, will easily appear to exceed the most enlarged thoughts of Men and Angels. As to this therefore, I must say with the Apostle,

H tle,

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tle, *who is sufficient for these things?* And as it was said of old, *who hath declared his Generation?* So I may (as justly) who can declare his Humiliation and Passion, and that Sacred Depth of Divine Love that was discovered therein?

That he whom the Heaven of Heavens could not contain, and of whom they borrow their Brightness and Glory, should be laid in a Manger, and live in Meanness and Obscurity; That He who is *Rich* from all Eternity should in time become poor for our Sakes; That He who was the God of *Israel*, the Author and Maintainer of the *Water of Life* (Rev. 22. 1.) should Himself be subject to Weariness and Thirst, and be fain to refresh himself with so weak a Cordial as the *Water of Jacob's Well* (John 4.) That He whom the Highest Angels worshipped should be abused by the basest Men, be reviled and scorn'd, buffeted

buffeted and spitted on, and (at last) be Crucified between two Malefactours, (as if he had been the worst of the Three) That He who was purer than all the created Inhabitants of the high and holy Place, should suffer himself to be tempted to Sin, and bear Day by Day, the vilest Assaults of the unclean Spirit: (*Math. 4.*) That He who upholdeth all things by the word of his power, (*Heb. 1.*) should be weak and faint, and in the midst of sorrows, give up the Ghost: That He who was the Heir of all things, and the Son of the Blessed, should be deprived of all Comforts, and cry out upon the Cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* and (in a word) fall under Condemnation, and be made a Curse, *Gal. 3. 13.* Wonder, Christian Reader, wonder evermore at that Superlative Love which moved him to do, and suffer such marvellous things for such as

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we. Methinks our Hearts ſhould be mightily affected with it, and our whole Souls be ſwallowed up as it were in this bleſſed and boundleſs Ocean ; And becauſe we can know but little of it whilſt we live, let us be content to dye, that our Souls may know it better ; For certainly the perfect Knowledge and Enjoyment of this tranſcendent Love of Chriſt, muſt needs be no leſs than Bleſſedneſs indeed. If the People of *Iſrael* ( after the Dedication of the Houſe of God ) went away ſo glad and merry in heart for the Goodneſs that the Lord had ſhewed them therein, (*2 Chron.* 7. 10.) If they had ſo much comfort in their Souls when Providence had delivered them from the ſorrows of their Captivity, and made them ſit in peace under their own Vines ; *Neb.* 8. 17. If the Wiſemen rejoyced ſo exceedingly when they ſaw but our Saviour's Star appear ? *Math.* 2. 10. O then what  
bleſſed

bleſſed Joy may we conceive to poſſeſs thoſe happy Souls, that partake of the ſweeteſt Influences of that Sun of Righteouſneſs, and enjoy thoſe Rivers of ſacred pleaſures that flow from his everlaſting Love? ( being perfected at the ſame time in their Love towards him ) This muſt needs be far better than the beſt condition here; and how much better thou ſhalt know, Chriſtian Reader, at the fitteſt Season, in a far better manner than I am able to tell thee.

## S E C T. XV.

*Being other Brief Improvements  
of the Point.*

**T**HIS Truth will truly serve for other good purposes, besides those already mentioned: and in the next place it may assure us of the comfortableness of a Christian Life. The Enemies of Religion being (as St. Paul speaketh) unreasonable and wicked men, instead of Reasons against it do rather deal in Reproaches and Slanders: And there's scarcely a greater reproach cast on it by the Men of the World than the unpleasantness of it (as they imagine) and the opposition they suppose it to carry against Mens present Comfort and Content. Religion



on they confess, is many times (like Fire ) a good Servant (as we use to say ) and therefore they think good ( it may be ) to have something of it, and make a profession of it for their Credit sake, or other earthly Ends : But in the mean time they are loth to account it a good Master : For if they came under the power of it, and be ruled by it in their general Course, they think it would make them melancholy, and robb them of the very Joy of their Lives. But assuredly there is no more reason why we should be afraid of Piety for the causeless Censures of ungodly Sinners, than why we should despise the Light of the Sun for a mad Man's mocking and railing at it.

Let men but try the good way in truth, and walk uprightly in it, and then ( my Life upon it ) it shall not ( in the main ) make them sad : It shall much rather make them

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glad ; yea it shall one day be the Joy of their Hearts to remember that they walked therein, 2 Cor. 1.

12. *This is our rejoycing, the Testimony of our Consciences, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, we have had our Conversation.*

And the reason of it may in part be seen from hence ; for the good Way shall have a good End, and bring them that walk in it to a happy State in spite of all that Death can do ; yea after it has done its worst upon them. When they depart this Life, they shall be with Christ which is far better, *Phil. 1. 23.*

2. We may here inform our selves of the Nature of those Troubles that come upon good Christians in this Life, *viz.* That they are but Crosses and not Curses: Trials of Grace and mercifull Visitations, not Vengeances in the least Degree, or any Effects of destructive wrath ; for surely that mercifull Father that will

will make them so happy after Death doth not mean any mischief to them, in the Afflictions he layeth on them in this present Life: But will make all things work together for good unto them that love him, *Rom. 8. 28.*

3. It may encourage Christians in their Spiritual Warfare, and make them to run with patience the Race that is set before them. How strenuously should they now strive against Sin, since they shall shortly be more than Conquerours through him that loved them? what Difficulties should make them weary of well doing, since they shall so certainly and so speedily enter upon the Eternal Rest?

4. Let Christians seriously consider this point and endeavour by Prayer and Meditation, and all other good means to get their Hearts more affected with this Happiness that is so near at hand. And to this end compare we the Joy of Just

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Mens Souls made perfect, with other matters of Consolation, that the Scripture offers unto our thoughts; O what gladness would it have put into the Heart of a pious Christian, to have seen the Saviour of the World in the Temple, to have heard him preach the Doctrine of Salvation, and speak as never Man spake? To have seen the Multitudes that were miraculously fed, and the Dead that were raised by him? To have seen him invite poor Sinners to himself (standing in the most solemn Day of the Festival) and crying with a loud Voice, *whosoever is athirst let him come unto me and drink*; especially if at the same time he could have known his need of him, and interest in him? And what a Joy would it have been to have seen him (after his Conquest over Death) ascending to the high and holy Place? To have stood among the Celestial Orbs

Orbs, to behold how he passed through the Regions of the Air, how dark the brightest Stars were made by the presence of their Maker's Glory? But chiefly, what a thing would it have been, to have seen the *Blessed Jesus* at his *Entrance* into the Heaven of Heavens? To have seen the Everlasting Doors set open for that *King* of Glory to enter in? together with that unconceivable welcome which he then received of all the Heavenly Hierarchy, Angels and Archangels, Cherubins and Seraphins, (all the innumerable Armies of immortal Spirits) congratulating his incomparable Victories over Sin, the Devil and Death, offering up their praises to him, and casting all their Crowns before him? How joyfull a thing may we well conceive this would have been, or rather joyfull beyond all our present conceptions? And yet I think we may easily believe that the perfected  
Spirits

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Spirits of the Just do enjoy more comfort than all this could amount to; for though in such Cases a Godly Man's Eye would in a great Measure affect his Soul, yet while his Soul is sinfull, 'tis impossible it should be so perfectly joyfull as when it is freed from all Sin; And while Sin is in it self Enmity against God, it abiding in us must needs be an Enemy to our Comforts, and withhold (in some measure) Good things from us.

S E C T.

S E C T. XVI.

*Being a farther Improvement of  
the Doctrine aforesaid, as an  
Antidote against the fear of  
Death.*

**H**E that dwells in a World where Dying is so much in fashion, should be (one would think) very inquisitive after something (if possible to be found) that may comfort him against that fatal stroke which he has so little hopes of escaping; nor can I apprehend how any Man should be able to lead a truly comfortable Life, that is not above the fears of Death, in some good measure; because there is no Place or Case, no Company or Condition, no Day nor Hour wherein



it may not overtake him (for ought he knows to the contrary.) And though what I am now to add can be but little comfort to the careless ungodly World (because Religion will comfort none whom it doth not rule) yet to the true conscientious Christian I hope it may afford even strong consolation ; For what more effectual Armor against the fears of Death can be shewed to such a one (or be wished by him) than this Truth before us? [That Death it self shall be his advantage, and prove a Friend unto his Soul.] If a Man have an Antipathy against Bleeding, (so as to faint almost at the very thought of it) yet he that can prove that it is necessary for him as a means against those difficult and dangerous distempers that he feels or fears (and can demonstrate the safety of it also) may thereby reconcile him to it, and make him not only content, but glad also, to  
part

part with a little of his Blood. Much more may a Godly Christian be content to part with his Life (when God calls for it,) while his Faith and his Reason is really satisfied, (by the word of truth) that his Death shall be safe and gainfull, and that his Lord and Saviour will be better to his Soul than the Life of his Body, and all created comforts whatsoever. For a wicked Man to be afraid of dying is no wonder at all, nor no Absurdity neither: well may he fear Death that shall feel Damnation after it, if he dye in the State he is yet in; but for a Religious Person, that placeth his Happinefs in God through Christ, and desires nothing more than to be fitter to serve and enjoy him: For such a one to be afraid of dying, O what pity is it? I do not say 'tis strange: For alas, it is but too common with the best: (Many are now of a fearfull Heart, that shall stand  
without

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without Fear at the Day of Judgment ; ) but I may safely say that such Fears, in such Persons, are very needless and strangely unreasonable. As yet I know nothing that a good Christian is less concern'd to fear than dying: For when he is *absent from the Body, he shall be present with the Lord*, 1 Cor. 5. 8. that is, in a more excellent manner than he was or could be, in this mortal Life, in a State far better, as 'tis expressed elsewhere (*Philip. 1. 23.*) God hath often said by his Prophets, *Fear not*, and in *Esay 40. 10.* He urges it to his Servant, with the Reason of it: [ *Fear not for I am with thee: Be not dismayed for I am thy God, &c.* ] Now if any should say this may excuse them perhaps from fearing ordinary Evils, but not from fearing Death, I wou'd then demand the Reason of his Speech, and can perswade my self that he cannot shew any Reason, truly so called, in defence.

fence of it; And I need say no more to confute him therein, than to tell him that God is the God of his People, as truly, and as comfortably at a dying Hour as at any other time; and that Death shall not separate them from the Love of God, *Rom. 8. 38.*

But possibly it may be expected that I should answer some objections; which also, with God's Assistance I shall endeavour to do.

*Obj. 1.* When you have said all you can, yet (say some) we know very well, that Dying is a Hard word, and a Harder thing: and hath such Difficulties accompanying it, as are puzzling and unpleasing to the most of Men.

*Ans.* What it may be to the *most*, is little to my purpose to enquire of: For 'tis not *most* Men but *good* and *upright* Christians that here I speak of. And that Dying is so hard a thing to such persons, I think I am not obliged

ged to believe: 'Tis confessed it may seem so unto them, but it is not so indeed; for the Difficulties are more fancifull than real. And when they are most troubled at the thoughts of Death, yet (in that Case) it is not Dying it self, but Snning and Doubting, that is the cause of their Distress: which as to the weakest true Christian they are pardoned for Christ's Sake, so at Death there is an end of them. ( See before, Sect. 12. ) Christ's Death for them has taken away the Sting of Death, ( 1 Cor. 15. 56, 57. ) So that they have more cause to be afraid of Living, than of Dying: For in Life they are liable to variety of Troubles, and may often be in heaviness through manifold Temptations: But in Dying, they are subject to none of them. From thence forth their Souls shall never see one evil Hour. *They that dye in the Lord are blessed from thence forth, and they rest from their Labours,* Rev. 14. 13. *Obj. 2.*

*Obj. 2.* But at a dying Hour we may expect *Satan's* fiercest Assaults, and strongest Temptations: For he is never more apt to assail us than when we are at the weakest; (as some report of the Learned and Pious Mr. *Pemble*, that when he lay on his Death-bed, the wicked one managed his subtilest Suggestions against him, even in way of Argument, to baffle his Faith in the Blessed Jesus, to keep his Soul from resting on that Rock of Salvation. )

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* This needs not to trouble any true hearted Christian: For (first,) he cannot conclude it shall therefore be his own case; or that his last Hour shall be, in any sad sense, an Hour of Temptation. God deals very variously with his People, and ordereth all their Affairs according to the Methods of his own most mercifull Will and Wisdom. Mr. *Pemble*, and others, had manifold Temptations in their latter Hours;

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Hours; Mr. *Holland*, *Molinæus*, Mr. *Robert Bolton*, and multitudes more had their Hearts then filled with Heaven's Peace; and though *Satan* wants not malice, or knowledge, to take advantage of their weaknesses, and to oppose them with his fiery Darts when he sees them least able to resist; yet we are sure his Power is limited, so that he cannot give them one Minute's disturbance more than God is pleased to permit, *whose mercy*, we are told, *is to everlasting upon them that fear him*, ( *Psal. 103. 17.* ) and therefore shall not be turned from them by all the Power of Hell. How well would they be satisfied if some of their best friends ( whose kindness they have most experienced ) had a power given them to order all circumstances that concern their Death? Behold the matter is much safer than so, and all their Affairs in a better hand. Sure I am, the truest Affection, and  
heartiest



heartiest Love of the most compassionate Parent upon Earth is as nothing, and vanity to the tender Mercy of that Great High Priest, and gracious Saviour with whom they have to do. Nor would he be called the Shepherd of their Souls ( 1 Pet. 2.25. ) if he did not mean to take care of them accordingly, and help them in their greatest need.

*Ob. 3.* But the mere Absence of the Soul from its Body, may seem to make its condition somewhat uncomfortable ; for Philosophers commonly write of the Desire it hath to the Body, and a late Metaphysical Pen has laid it down as a Theorem [ *Desiderat Anima separata iterum cum corpore conjungi* ] i. e. The separated Soul desires to be united to its Body.

*Ans.* As to this, I think that of St. Paul to the Coloss. may fitly be remembered, *Take heed lest any man spoyle you through Philosophy and vain Deceit* : For indeed, Some things  
that

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that go under that Name are sufficiently vain and deceitfull. And as to this. [ the Soul's desire to be united to the Body again ] if meant of the Souls of the Just, to me seemerh no excellent Notion; nor can I conceive how men should know it if it were so indeed. Their Arguments for it I am not satisfied in, and I hope it is excusable if I venture to urge one or two against it.

I. If a good Christian's Soul, when absent from the Body, doth actually and properly desire to be joyned to it, (as a sick man desireth health, or a Prisoner Liberty) then whilst separate, it must wish to be in another condition; as the Sick wisheth his health. But the separated Soul of a good Christian doth not wish it self at that time any other condition: for being perfectly *sanctified*, it is perfectly *satisfied* in the Will of God, who crowneth it with his loving kindness, and is better

ter unto it than the Body, and all the comforts here below.

2. If such a Soul thus desireth to be in the Body ; then, the Being in the Body seems to it a better and more desirable State, but that it doth not, nor cannot without Delusion ; for St. Paul tells us, *to depart and be with Christ is far better*, Philip. 1. And if in any sense it desires to be joyned to its Body, yet it desires this only in God's appointed time, for the reason afore given.

Ob. 4. But may it not grieve a Man to think of leaving his old Friends and Acquaintance, and going into that World and State which he never saw, nor ever spake with any that did?

*Ans.* Doubtless this is that which lyeth hid in the hearts of many, though they speak not to any such purpose: And an evil Heart of unbelief may be much moved by it. But how little cause a Godly Christian

stian hath to be unwilling to dye on this Account, a few words may suffice to make manifest. For,

1. He that is such indeed hath his Will, in some good measure, resigned up to his God, whose Will is, that He and his Friends should not dwell always together in this World.

2. The Friends that he leaveth at Death, are but fellow Creatures, and sinfull ones too ; such Friends as may afflict him, as well as comfort him ; in a word, such as may hinder, as well as help in the way towards Heaven. (Nor can their greatest Friendship be firm and constant to him any farther than God's Favour doth make it so, nor do them any good without his good providence.) But by Death, the Sanctified Soul is translated into a far better condition, to enjoy that most gracious glorious God, who was his first and best Friend ; to whose undeserved goodness he was absolutely beholding for  
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all the kindness that ever any Creature shew'd him; In short, that blessed God to whom all Nations, (as the Prophet speaks,) are as nothing and vanity; that God whose Name alone is excellent, and his Glory above the Heavens; whose Power is Omnipotency, whose Time is Eternity, whose Bounty is unspeakable, and whose Benignity is better than Life, *Psal. 63. 3.* And touching the other part of the Objection, *viz.* [the Strangeness of the State that the Soul doth enter upon] nothing but gross infidelity can make it seem of any weight. For (1.) *Strangeness* in it self hath no harm in it: When the man that was born blind had Sight given him by Our Saviour, it was doubtless a *Strange* thing to him to perceive the Light which he never did before, nor could have any Ideas of: yet the change was not grievous but joyous unto him. How much more must it be so with that blessed Change

(to a Blessedness that changeth not) which a gracious Soul shall find after Death? And (2.) as to such a *Strangeness* as consisteth in *unacquaintedness*; I take it to be a strange Fancy, without any ground at all in Scripture or Reason: yea the contrary seems very evident from Scripture. For as to their God the Case is clear; in their absence from the Body they are present with the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 8. And that it is meant of a more special and comfortable presence with him than before they had, may easily be gathered from the Apostle's Scope in that place; and is partly proved in a foregoing Section, where that most comfortable Text is insisted on. And how can they but have a nearer Communion with him, when they are freed from Ignorance and Unbelief, and all those things that are offensive in his Sight?

And concerning the Creatures also, I humbly conceive that the  
Souls

Souls of such Persons do not want for Acquaintance with them : How can we imagine that those Holy Angels should desire to be strange to those Souls in another World, that delighted to do them good in this World, and rejoiced in their Grace and Repentance? *Luke 15. 10.* Will those heavenly Inhabitants chuse to be at a Distance with them, when they are most perfectly united to their glorious Lord and Head, Jesus Christ the Righteous? This let them believe that can : for my part I hate the Thoughts of so gross a Solecism. And I see no cause to doubt of the spiritual Communion and Converse of Holy Souls with each other, in this their State of Separation ; The knowing one another can be no inconvenience when they are compleated in Grace, and perfected in Love. That *Charity* and *Joy* are found in the perfected Spirits of the Just, is confessed by all that believe them to



such, and to partake of any Happiness after Death: And how can these Affections more properly be exercised among them, than in *Rejoycing* at each others Happiness? And how can *that* be without the Knowledge of each other, and of their happy State? And to this I shall only add the position of the Learned *Macco-vius. Communicant Animæ Separatæ, &c.* Separated Souls do communicate their minds to one another. *De Anima Sep. Cap. 4.*

*Ob. 5.* But (say some) it is not Dying, but *sorrowfull* Dying that we are so unwilling of. Alas, we are so haunted with horrible Temptations, and our Faith and Hope are so sadly shaken therewith, that we fear lest we should dye in Despair: which also we are the more amazed at, because we are told that Despair is a most horrid Sin, such as spoileth all at once (as we say) and stops up (as it were) the current of God's Mercy towards us.

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* This

*Ans.* This Objection I cannot but think fit to deal with ; and I am the more willing to do so for the Satisfaction of those, whose Religious Friends may have dyed in Doubts and Fears, and with no Appearance of comfort : ) For which end I lay down the ensuing Assertions.

1. That such a case is not inconsistent with the State of a true Christian. Though the bright Morning Star (Christ so called) be truly risen upon any Person, and hath imparted to him the Light of Life, yet that doth not make it impossible for his Sun to set in a Cloud ; for the Word of God says nothing to the contrary. Though he therein promiseth his Servants everlasting Joy after Death, yet he promised not that they should have Joy the Minute, or Hour before they dye. And when *Solomon* tells us, *there is one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked* (as to outwards he meaneth) *Ecl. 9. 2.* I

cannot fanſie, why any uncomfortable Circumſtances about Death ſhould ſeem to be excepted. Our Bleſſed Lord himſelf (in compariſon of whoſe Holineſs the Heaven of Heavens is but unclean) departed this Life in the Depths of Sorrow, and cryed with a loud voice, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Math. 27. 46. 50. Which being intimated, gave ſome ſatiſfaction to a Learned and worthy Divine, when (in his laſt Sickneſs) he asked his Friend, what that man might think of the State of his Soul that is juſt a-dying, and can find no comfort in his God? Mr. *Rob. Bolton* mentioneth a very Religious Gentlewoman, who in her latter Hours was exerciſed with many Sorrows, and, to appearance, dyed in them (ſhewing little or no Sign of any comfort in her Soul.) But that judicious Man of God did not think the worſe of her State, or queſtion her Salvation:  
but

but rather supposed that sad Dispensation of her God to be in Judgment to those wicked People, that maliciously slandered her good Conversation in Christ; that those who would not be bettered by her unblamable Life, might be hardened by her uncomfortable Death.

But this we may account God's *strange Work*, most commonly the way of Holiness doth end more comfortably. And we are assured the upright ones end is peace, *Psal.* 37.37. though we cannot be sure of peace in his Soul just before his End; because we read God's Judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out. Thus of the first Assertion.

The Second is this, [That to be followed much with Satan's forest Temptations is no ill Sign] St. *Paul* himself complained of Terrors within, as well as Troubles without. Yea Christ himself, when

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his Heavenly Father had solemnly owned him for his Beloved Son in whom he was well pleased, *Math. 3. 17.* the next news we hear of him was, that he was led into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil, (yea 40 days, as *St. Mark* hath it. *Mark 1. 11. 13.*) whilst the strong man armed keepeth possession, the things he hath are in peace. The Pyrate spendeth not his biggest Bullet upon the empty Ships, but upon the laden, and best laden. So Satan doth not cast the fiery Darts of his Temptations, against those that are under his accursed slavery, and follow the ways he wou'd have them, (at least not usually, nor unless he have them at a pinch, as we say, under some considerable Crosses as to the World,) but rather against those that have chosen a better Master, and turned through grace into the Holy Path.

The third Assertion in answer to  
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the said Objection is thus, [ That a Christian's Fear of Dying uncomfortably, is no sign that he shall Dye so.] As God bids his Prophet, say to them that are of a fearfull heart, *Be strong and fear not* : So he is pleased many times to strengthen and encourage them abundantly, and do for them above all they could ask or think. He that had his Spirit overwhelmed in him, and walked mournfully all the year round by reason of those blasphemous Suggestions, that the unclean Spirit had so constantly exercised him with, yet at length was enabled to offer up joyfull Praises to his God and Saviour, and ended his days in a blessed peace, (as a great Authour hath testified.) The like is recorded of Mr. *Saunders*, viz. That though he was sometimes much concerned ( as we call it ) to think what he should do if he should be brought to the fiery Trial, yet when he was brought to

it, he had his Fears removed, and (being strengthened with God's Spirit of Might) passed as comfortably through that Sea of Blood, as the rest of that noble Army of Martyrs.

The fourth Assertion. [God often worketh by contraries, and brings about his gracious purposes by means that seem the most unlikely.] As he brought water for his People, not out of the Sea or the River, but out of the Rock; so he often suffers those People to be most shaken with Temptations, whom he meaneth most to establish, to make most grounded and rooted in the Faith. Of which I might instance in *Luther* and others, if it were my purpose to enlarge on this particular.

The fifth Assertion. [The Arm of God's Love is infinitely stronger than the Arm of a Christian's Faith:] If therefore he be such in sincerity, he may be sure that either he shall not Dye in despair (or Discomfort) or else



else that he shall not be ruined by Dying so. For if his Graces be never so much opposed, yet God's Kindness to his Servants is absolute and unconquerable. If their Faith and Hope shou'd seem to be shaken beyond recovery, yet compassion cannot fail in the Father of Mercies, and his Covenant of Peace shall not be removed, *Esay* 54. 10. so *Rom.* 8. 38. *What shall separate us (so speaking of the rest of the faithfull as of himself) from the Love of Christ? Neither Death nor Life, nor things present, nor things to come; (that is, they shall never do it, by any means, or any sad Circumstances that can attend them.)*

The sixth Assertion [ Despair, in all kinds and cases, is no such heinous and dangerous Sin as some have imagined. ] ( And it were to be wished that some Authours, otherwise learned and good, had written more cautiously about it than they have done. )

done. ) And those that despaired of *Francis Spira's* Salvation, because he ended his days in the darkness of Despair may seem as unskillfull, as uncharitable : and I believe they have been blamed for it by many Divines besides, and since, *Mr. Perkins*.—— But to come directly to the point it self. *Despair* therefore may be considered in several sorts of People, and on several grounds ( or occasions of it. )

As to the first; *Despair* in a wicked man, if total and ordinary, I confess must needs be a very sad matter ; because it hinders him from using the means of Salvation. Yet it doth not make his Salvation impossible, because 'tis not impossible for it to be removed.

2. To despair of Salvation out of a conceit, that there is not in Christ a sufficient Power and Merit for that purpose : This, I say, is no less dangerous ; because it is grounded on a  
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prevalent Unbelief, and argues the Person under it to have no right Apprehensions of the Person of Christ, or the Excellency and Alſufficiency of his Merit and Righteousneſs.

3. But for a true Chriſtian to be brought into Deſpair by *Temptations* and *Miſtakes*, this I cannot conceive to be ſuch a heinous Sin, or ſuch a dangerous Caſe. For example ; If through Melancholy, or Satan's Suggeſtions, he be brought to think, that he is under the guilt of the unpardonable Sin, then he cannot chuſe but deſpair of being pardoned. And though I believe it is a great truth, that no true Chriſtian ſhall ever be guilty of the unpardonable Sin (having an intereſt in Chriſt, and there being no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt, even ſuch as walk not after the Fleſh but after the Spirit, *Rom.* 8. 1, 2. and for other reaſons that need not now be named :) Yet I doubt not but ſuch a one may fear  
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he is under it, and verily think so : I remember Mr. Fox tells us it was the case of Mr. *John Glover* a Person of exemplary Piety. So that Despair, in such persons and on such grounds, may be reckoned amongst those Frailties and Infirmities which our God doth pardon of course to his adopted Children in Christ.

He is (what he is stiled) their *Heavenly Father*, (*Mat. 6.*) and we can easily understand that the Child is incomparably safer by his Father's Hold of him, than by any Hold that he can take of his Father.

He is their God for ever, *Psf. 48. 14.* and no Darkness or Discomfort, no Terrour of Life or shadow of Death shall ever deprive them of their Interest in him, or d'sannull his purpose of Grace which was towards them in *Christ Jesus* before the World began.

*Ob. 6.* But after all this, you may perhaps (when your turn comes) be

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as much afraid to Dye as others are.

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* Very like so; I can say nothing to the contrary: nor can I tell in the least how it will be with me, in point of comfort at my last Hour. I well know, that of my self I am as nothing, and all my Sufficiency is of God. I shall therefore fear the last Enemy, either much or little, or not at all, according as that King Eternal shall be pleased to grant or to withhold the Influences and Assistances of his Holy Spirit. If he should leave me to my self, to the Power of Temptation (to the Doubts and Sins of my own Heart) I know my Spirit would fail on a suddain, and I should look like those that have been seven Days dead. But (good Reader) how weaksoever, I or others may be, yet our God is Strong and Faithfull and True: and the Emphyrean Heaven may sooner fall and perish, than the least part of his promised Goodness fail. Go on there.

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therefore, O Christian, in the *good Way* with a good Courage and Resolution ; Live upon Christ, and live unto him, and serve that blessed Lord with Joyfulness of Heart ; Fear not the Reproach of Men, nor be afraid of their Revilings: Endeavour to bring Glory to the Name of Christ by walking (more and more) as becomes his Gospel, and then never value a thousand hard Censures, and disgracefull Names, or any other cruel Arts that Hell can invent to discourage Religion by. For e're long through the tender Mercies of our God, thou shalt be above the reach of all thy Enemies ; when thou removest from the best of thy Friends on Earth, thou shalt dwell with those that Love thee better ; When thy Soul shall leave this malignant World, it shall see the Love of the Lord Jesus ; that free, that full, that glorious Love which is better

ter than Life and stronger than Death, which makes the Host of Heaven glad, and fills the Seraphims with Sacred Joy.

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## A P O S T S C R I P T,

*Attempting the Resolution of a weighty Question; with an Appendix to the 13<sup>th</sup>. Section concerning Christ's Filiation, in a Letter to a Learned Authour.*

S I R, I am satisfied in your Opinion of the Necessity, or at least the Expediency of Answering those Opposers, who enquire how 'tis likely the Soul can *Act*, when 'tis without its *Body* to act in? since it apparently dependeth on the Body in its Operations, and its actings are evidently hindered when the Body is indisposed by Sleep or Sickness, &c.  
Which



Which I hope may in part be solved by the ensuing Considerations.

1. That the Soul's depending on the Body in some of its Actings doth only prove, that it hath need of the Body in it's *present State* wherein it was appointed to act in it, and by it.

2. That the Soul doth act in some ways very much, when the Body least contributes to its Operation. Even in Sleep it self the Soul is not wholly unactive, for it then acteth by Thoughts and Dreams.

And as some tell us they seldom wake but out of some Degree of Dreaming : So 'tis impossible for any to prove that they did not *dream*, or exercise a *thinking* power in their deepest Sleeps ; for that may be, though they do not remember it. Some Mens Fancies and Consciences have acted most strangely, when their Bodies have lain as dead many Hours together ; declaring when they came to their Senses, what a  
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sad case they had been in, and thought themselves to have been in Hell.

3. That its Dependance on the Body in some of its Operations, doth not prove its Dependance on it in All: or in those that are most natural to it, as *Understanding* and *Willing*, *Hoping* or *Fearing*, *Joying* or *Sorrowing*.

4. That God who hath told us in his word that it is Immortal, and cannot be Killed (*Matth. 10. 28.*) doth know how to preserve its operating power, without the help of a Weak and Dying Body. If its Life and Being doth not depend upon its union with the Body, why should we conceive its Operation and Apprehension to depend on it?

5. Though the Soul in its *Separation* be without its Terrestrial Body, yet it may not therefore be concluded to have No Body to *Act* in: for it may have an *Aërial Body*; which was so far from being counted absurd.

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furd by the Ancients, that they did suppose the Angels themselves to be (in some sense) embodied Creatures. And perhaps it may be hard to prove, that the Holy Apostle doth not mean some such thing, when he saith [*we desire to be cloathed upon, with our House which is from Heaven, 2 Cor. 5. 2. and (verse 4.) not that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon.*]

6. When the same Apostle had (in his Rapture to the third Heaven) such Divine Discoveries as he could not utter, he assures us, that he could not tell us in what State he had them. [*Whether in the Body or out of the Body, I cannot tell*] 2 Cor. 12. 2, 3. Which it seems was very remarkable, since it is mentioned twice in those verses. Now how can it be imagined, that the Apostle should make it his business, to declare that he knew not whether he had those Revelations *in the Body or*

out of it, if the Soul without its Terrestrial Body, were an Unactive and Insensible thing?

Sir, I have also considered farther about the great Point we were discoursing of; [whether Christ be the Son of God on the Account of his miraculous Conception?] and for the Negative I would humbly offer these Reasons.

1. Because the Affirmative seems to enervate the Arguments, that Orthodox Divines use to prove him the Son of God by Real and Eternal Generation; or at least, to take away the necessity of arguing about it: For ( they will say ) what need any Man seek such a ground of his Sonship, if he may fitly be called the Son of God upon a far different Account?

2. Because Christ is not *therefore* called [ the Son of God ] in any Scripture unless it be in *Luke* 1. 35. And I think it hath not yet been  
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proved that he is so called in that place on that Account, for  $\delta\iota\delta$   $\chi$  is the only Nerve that the proof of the contrary-minded is fastened on; which methinks should afford no cogent Argument: For the Particle [ $\delta\iota\delta$ ] may be consequential as well as causal: And 'tis hard to find any thing in that Text (or context) that will prove it to be *causal*. And possibly the Conjunctive [ $\chi$ ] may make against it.

3. *Relationes se mutuo ponunt*: If therefore Christ be the Son of God upon several grounds, he must have several Filiations in *Respect of God*, and so should be *more* than *one Son of God*; unless a Man suppose his miraculous Conception to be the *only* Reason why he is called the Son of God; which as it will never be granted by the Orthodox, so I think it is not asserted by any at all.

4. It seems needless for Christ to have any other Filiation in Respect  
of

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of God, than what is grounded on Eternal Generation. As to himself 'tis plain he hath no need: And there seems to be as little need of it as to us; Because his Eternal Sonship is every way sufficient to enable the *Humane* Nature, and to put a glorious Value upon what he did and suffered for us.

I have not consulted Authours upon this Occasion: So that this is but the Result of my own Thoughts, which may have need of Rectification, and the whole, Sir, is humbly submitted to your favourable, yet impartial Censure, by

Your Obliged Servant,

J. B.

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## ERRATA.

Page 56, Line 20, for *greatest*, read  
*grossest*. p. 131. l. 4. for *fitted*

read *[fitted]*. p. 32. line

for *the*, read *the*.



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